

JULY 54

THE MONTH

APRIL 1954

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THE MEASURE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN¹

By
RUSSELL KIRK

“**W**HATEVER THE RESULT of the convulsion whose first shocks were beginning to be felt, there would still be enough square miles of earth for elbow-room; but that ineffable sentiment made up of memory and hope, of instinct and tradition, which swells every man’s heart and shapes his thought, though perhaps never present to his consciousness, would be gone from it, leaving it common earth and nothing more. Men might gather rich crops from it, but that ideal harvest of priceless associations would be reaped no longer; that fine virtue which sent up messages of courage and security from every sod of it would have evaporated beyond recall. We should be irrevocably cut off from our past, and be forced to splice the ragged ends of our lives upon whatever new conditions chance might leave dangling for us.”

So James Russell Lowell wrote in his essay on Lincoln. In truth, Abraham Lincoln’s election to the presidency of the United States is the great line of demarcation in the history of America; for the triumph of the North during the four terrible years that followed swept away the American society from which Lincoln arose, and Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, and material aggrandizement made it certain that the United States would not look upon his like again. A man very unlike Lincoln in his origins, but markedly like him in heart—Nathaniel Hawthorne—wrote, in the last year of his life (the year of Gettysburg), of “the hurricane that is sweeping us all along with it, possibly into a Limbo where our nation and its polity may be as literally the fragments of a shattered dream as my unwritten Romance.” Both the New England of Hawthorne and the backwoods Illinois of Lincoln were effaced by the whirlwind of fanaticism which had first stirred in their youth, had wailed onward to

¹ *Abraham Lincoln*, by Benjamin Thomas (Eyre & Spottiswoode 25s).
The Ethics of Rhetoric, by Richard Weaver (Henry Regnery, Chicago \$3.50).

Sumner, and then had raved triumphant from Manassas to Appomattox. From that hurricane-fanned conflagration of reforming enthusiasm and sinful appetite which became Civil War and Reconstruction, American moral and political conservatism has not yet recovered, and perhaps never can. With Lincoln dead, the obligations of conservative restoration lay with the mind of the victorious North; but the Northern intellect, which practically was the New England intellect, faltered before this tremendous task, being ill-equipped for it. The crabbed conservative strain which wound through New England character, reaching its most humane expression in Hawthorne, was in essence a conservatism of negation; after 1865, burdened with the necessity for affirmation and reconstruction, the New England mind shied and groaned and cursed at these perplexities. For years earlier, the masters of New England—not the State Street men, but leaders like Charles Francis Adams and Sumner and Everett and Parker and Emerson, the men of speculation and statecraft—had been engaged in a perilous, self-righteous flirtation with radicalism, political abstraction, and that kind of fanatic equalitarianism which Garrison represented. Their conservative instincts were bewildered by the passion of this moral crusade, the Civil War, and by the influence of Transcendentalism; they scarcely remembered where to look for the foundations of a conservative order; and power slipped from their grasp during the administration of Ulysses S. Grant. The ruined South, in that age, could not afford the luxury of any species of thought—there, every nerve was strained, for decades, to deal hastily with exigencies, somehow to make a dismembered economy stir again, in some fashion to reconcile negro emancipation with social stability; her disfranchised leaders were employed, half dazed, in writing apologia, like Davis and Stephens, or in mending resignedly the fabric of civilization, like Lee. Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, had neither the mind nor the temper to save his country from the rapacity and the folly of the age of Reconstruction, though he did all he could to realize the wise and moderate policies which Lincoln had outlined. American conservatism never has recovered wholly from that blight. To-day, however, the United States, waking to the vastness of its moral responsibilities throughout the world, seeks with increasing earnestness for conservative principles and

examples. This present conservative yearning of the American nation gives a renewed interest to study of the mind and policies of Abraham Lincoln.

Two recent books contribute something toward this subject. Mr. Thomas' one-volume life of Lincoln, the best short biography since Lord Charnwood's, has no power of style; but it is a plain, sound, honest, impartial account of one of the strangest and most appealing figures ever to rise to great political authority. Mr. Weaver's long essay is a closely-reasoned exercise in criticism, designed to prove Seneca's observation that "As a man speaks, so is he"; for our present purpose, the most significant chapters are those on Burke and Lincoln, in which Mr. Weaver comes to the conclusion that Lincoln was a sounder conservative than was Burke. "What is conservatism?" Lincoln himself asked, before he was president. "Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?" Conservatism is that, but it is also a great deal more, as these two books suggest. Mr. J. G. Randall, Lincoln's most scholarly biographer, thinks of his subject as a liberal. But as Mr. Stanley Pargellis, in 1945, pointed out with cogency, in his cast of mind, his policies, and his empiricism, Lincoln was strongly conservative; and Mr. Weaver, for rather different reasons, holds the same opinion. Moreover, Lincoln's original allegiance was to the Whigs, then the conservative party of the United States; and, says Mr. Weaver, "It is no accident that Lincoln became the founder of the greatest American conservative party, even if that party was debauched soon after his career ended. He did so because his method was that of the conservative." There are some stirrings of true conservatism in the Republican party nowadays; and it is time, probably, that Republican leaders began to understand their founder, as well as to praise him.

Among the lessons taught by the French Revolution there is none sadder or more striking than this, that you may make everything else out of the passions of men except a political system that will work, and that there is nothing so pitilessly and unconsciously cruel as sincerity formulated into dogma. It is always demoralizing to extend the domain of sentiment over questions where it has no legitimate jurisdiction; and perhaps the severest strain upon Mr. Lincoln was in resisting a tendency of his own supporters which chimed with his own private desires, while wholly opposed to his convictions of what would be wise policy.

This is Lowell again, writing with high truth and justice. Lincoln never was a doctrinaire; he rose from very low estate to very high estate, and he knew the savagery which lies so close beneath the skin of man, and he knew that most men are good only out of obedience to routine and convention. The Fire-eater and the Abolitionist were abhorrent to him; yet he took the middle path between them not out of any misapplication of the doctrine of the golden mean, but because he held by the principle that the unity and security of the United States transcended any fanatic scheme of uniformity. As Mr. Weaver observes, "he is astonishingly free from tendency to assume that 'the truth lies somewhere in between.' " Here he was very like Burke; yet it is improbable that he ever read Burke, or any other political philosopher except Blackstone; his wisdom came from the close observation of human nature, and from the Bible and Shakespeare. The Radical Republicans detested him as much as the Southern zealots did. In his great conservative end, the preservation of the Union, he succeeded; and he might have succeeded in a conservative labour equally vast, the restoration of order and honesty, had not Booth's pistol put an end to the charity and fortitude of this uncouth, homely, melancholy, lovable man.

Sentimental adulation has done much harm to the memory of the real Lincoln; and the man who reads Carl Sandburg's biography may do well to balance it with the bitter criticisms of Donald Davidson in *The Attack on Leviathan*. Mr. Thomas, however, writes with a painstaking seriousness, sedulous to clear away the cobwebs of legend even at the expense of every shred of the picturesque.

There emerges the form of a man who, until late in his life, seemed thoroughly unlikely ever to be a leader of opinion or of party, let alone a statesman—a man who entered politics simply with the modest hope of making a tolerable living out of political office, clumsy always, often feckless, declaring in his debates with Douglas that it is "better to be a live dog than a dead lion," defeated for years in every endeavour to influence politics on a national scale, a self-taught back-country lawyer, sunk in melancholy, married to a neurotic woman, eclipsed in his own party by men whose talents seemed to outshine his immeasurably. We see him (through the eyes of his partner Herndon) enduring the excesses of his disorderly children, who "soon gutted the room—

gutted the shelves of books—rifled the drawers and riddled boxes—battered the points of gold pens against the stove—turned over the ink-stands on the papers—scattered letters over the office and danced over them.” We see him apparently unfit for regular business of any description, his office all higgledy-piggledy, amid its confusion an envelope marked, in Lincoln’s hand, “When you can’t find *it* anywhere else, look into this.” We see him, only three years before he won the presidential election, still an obscure and gawky Western attorney, attending court in Cincinnati, in his rumpled clothes, a blue cotton umbrella in his hand, snubbed by Stanton and the other distinguished lawyers. The man still seemed pathetic at best, if not downright ludicrous; all the majesty and loneliness of his tragedy was yet to come.

So Lincoln seemed to the casual observer, at least. For all that, ever since his boyhood his friends had perceived in this curious being some element of greatness. Lincoln possessed the incongruous dignity that was Samuel Johnson’s, too. Here was a man of sorrows. It has always been true that melancholy men are the wittiest; and Lincoln’s off-colour yarns, told behind a log barn or in some dingy Springfield office, were part and parcel of his consciousness that this is a world of vanities. The attempts of Herndon and other biographers to find the source of this brooding sorrowfulness in some early blighted love are puerile, and Mr. Thomas shows what slight foundation those notions have. “What? Would you cry for a little girl?” Epictetus asks. So it was with Lincoln. He was no woman’s man, of course, and his marriage was made tolerable only by his own vast charity and tenderness; but he never was the man to weep over his own blemishes or errors. The vanity of human wishes: Lincoln’s awareness of this unalterable reality, combining with his knowledge of all the weaknesses of poor sinning mortality, made the man noble in his sadness, and gave him the strength to endure with humility and generosity the terrible burdens of his office. When Chief Justice Taney, “old, shrunken, and shrivelled like ‘a galvanized corpse,’” administered the inaugural oath to the first Republican President, *sic transit gloria mundi* was stamped across the face of the strange giant in the new black suit, whose lacklustre eyes stared down upon the crowd, the soldiers, and the cannon from a rough platform built against the unfinished Capitol.

Once I heard a popular speaker declare that what modern America needs is "old-fashioned religion, the sort of religion that Washington and Lincoln had." Now that would be a most imperfect sort of religion: for Washington's eighteenth-century conformity was scarcely more than moralism, and Lincoln was a Christian only in the vaguest of senses, if a Christian at all. Every American president employs the phrases of Christian piety; but very few presidents have been conspicuously devout. Lincoln began as a naïve sceptic; he received next to no religious instruction of any description; solitary reading of the Bible gave majesty to his mind and his style, but never brought to him any faith less cloudy and austere than a solemn theism. Yet there have been few Americans more thoroughly graced with the theological virtues, charity most of all. The New Testament shines out from his acts of mercy, and the Old from his direction of the war. We all know the high piety of his Gettysburg Address; and in some of his letters there looms up a great and stern Christian justice, as in his order appointing Hooker to the command of the Army of the Potomac:

I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons. And yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skilful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm. But I think that during Gen. Burnside's command of the Army, you have taken counsel of your ambition, and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country, and to a most meritorious and honourable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a Dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes, can set up dictators. What I now ask you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done, and will do, for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the Army, of criticizing their commander, and withholding

confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you, as far as I can, to put it down. Neither you, nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army, while such a spirit prevails in it.

And now, beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy, and sleepless vigilance, go forward, and give us victories.

This prophetic majesty was not Lincoln's constant mood, nor did it predominate in his character until the War called forth the latent greatness in the back-country politician. When, at the beginning of his administration, Lincoln called Charles Francis Adams to Washington to appoint him minister to England, the dignified and nearly humourless son of John Quincy Adams was confounded by the boorish and almost inane manner of the head of the Republic. The President, lounging heavily in his office, addressed a few brusque and inconsequential remarks to the representative of the greatest family in America, about to assume the most important diplomatic post in the world; then, as if forgetting Adams' very existence, he turned aside to discuss some obscure postmastership with a member of his Cabinet. Lincoln was, indeed, a puzzle. Nearly all the leaders of his own party hated him, or despised him, or thought he would be the ruin of the Republicans. "We asked for a rail-splitter, and we have got one." It was a surprise to nearly everyone that he was nominated for the presidency, and a surprise that he was elected. He won only by a plurality of the popular vote—nothing like a majority. But here, unknown to almost everyone, was a man for the ages. The war made Lincoln great—not by chance, but by summoning forth the noble fortitude and gravity that had no more than peeked out timidly from him in his Illinois years. How far Lincoln himself was conscious that a Providential purpose worked through him, we cannot be sure; yet some such apprehension rings from the phrases of his speeches and letters between 1861 and 1865. Here was a man; and as the best of life is tragic, and as the highest reward of virtuous life is a noble end, so this man was fortunate in the hour of his death.

Lincoln was struck down at the height of his powers, having endured with meekness and resignation all the agony of the war years; he died at the moment all his hopes were rewarded and all his acts justified. He passed from life unblemished by the rancour and corruption of the Reconstruction era, so that the

intended evil of Booth's bullet was in reality, for Lincoln, a great relief and blessing.

Misunderstood in life, Lincoln the statesman has been generally misunderstood during the eighty-nine years which have elapsed since his death. He never was an Abolitionist, and the act for which he is most celebrated, the Emancipation Proclamation, he undertook simply as a measure of military expediency, not as a moral judgment. If he could have preserved the Union, short of war, by tolerating slavery forever, he would have done so. He was no fanatic reformer of society. Acton, in his essay on "The Causes of the American Revolution" (1861), touches upon the perplexed nature of the slavery question in America—or rather of the negro question, which the Civil War and Reconstruction did not solve, and which is nowhere near solution to-day; Acton writes of the abstractions of modern revolutionaries, and adds:

Very different is the mode in which the Church labours to reform mankind by assimilating realities with ideals, and accommodating herself to times and circumstances. Her system of Christian liberty is essentially incompatible with slavery and the power of masters over their slaves was one of the bulwarks of corruption and vice which most seriously impeded her progress. Yet the Apostles never condemned slavery even within the Christian fold. The sort of civil liberty which came with Christianity into the world, and was one of her postulates, did not require the abolition of slavery. If men were free by virtue of their being formed after the image of God, the proportion in which they realized that image would be the measure of their freedom. Accordingly, St. Paul prescribed to the Christian slave to remain content with his condition. . . .

The Secession movement was not provoked merely by the alarm of the slave-owners for their property, when the election of Lincoln sent down the price of slaves from twenty-five to fifty per cent, but by the political danger of Northern preponderance; and the mean whites of the Southern States are just as eager for separation as those who have property in slaves. For they fear lest the republicans, in carrying emancipation, should abolish the barriers which separate the negroes from their own caste. At the same time, the slaves show no disposition to help the republicans, and be raised to the level of the whites. There is a just reason for this fear, which lies in the simple fact that the United States are a republic. The population of a republic must be homogeneous. Civil equality must be founded on social equality, and on national and physiological unity. This has been the strength of the American republic. Pure democracy is that

form of government in which the community is sovereign, in which, therefore, the State is most nearly identified with society. But society exists for the protection of interests; the State for the realization of right—"concilia coetusque hominum *jure* sociati, quae civitates appellantur." The State sets up a moral, objective law, and pursues a common object distinct from the ends and purposes of society. This is essentially repugnant to democracy, which recognizes only the interests and rights of the community, and is therefore inconsistent with the consolidation of authority which is implied in the notion of the State. It resists the development of the social into the moral community. If, therefore, a democracy includes persons with separate interests or an inferior nature, it tyrannizes over them. There is no mediator between the part and the whole; there is no room, therefore, for differences of class, of wealth, of race; equality is necessary to the liberty which is sought by a pure democracy.

Lincoln, by birth a Southern poor-white, perceived distinctly the complexity of this problem, as Acton suggests it; while Senator Sumner, for instance, eminent among the New England illuminati, remained oblivious to all the gargoyle faces that huddled slyly behind fanatic Abolition. For a long time, Lincoln resisted the importunities of the Radicals in favour of negro emancipation; he yielded, at length, out of the desperate necessities of the Union cause; and once the thing was done, he engaged in a number of unsuccessful endeavours to settle the freed negroes in the West Indies or in Latin America. He tried to persuade the members of his Cabinet to agree to a monetary compensation of former slaveholders out of the federal treasury, and was profoundly saddened at their refusal to support him in this. His proposals for Reconstruction in the South—carried out by Johnson so far as Johnson had the power to enforce them—saved the Southern states from much of the ignominy, and some of the material ruin, which the Radicals would have inflicted upon them; and had his moderate projects for the gradual improvement of the freedmen been made effectual, the whole present problem of race in America might be a good deal less distressing.

In this, for the most part, as in much else, Abraham Lincoln was a conservative statesman of a high order. Lincoln himself remarked of the founders of American independence (as Mr. Weaver reminds us),

They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly laboured for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colours everywhere.

To this ideal of liberty under law, Lincoln added his own example, which has worked incalculable good in the altered America which has followed 1865. His greatness came from his recognition of enduring moral principle. I cannot do better than to conclude in the words of Mr. Weaver:

Let it be offered as a parting counsel that parties bethink themselves of how their chieftains speak. This is a world in which one often gets what one asks for more directly or more literally than one expects. If a leader asks only consequences, he will find himself involved in naked competition of forces. If he asks only circumstance, he will find himself intimidated against all vision. But if he asks for principle, he may get that, all tied up and complete, and though purchased at a price, paid for. Therefore it is of first importance whether a leader has the courage to define. Nowhere does a man's rhetoric catch up with him more completely than in the topics he chooses to win other men's assent.

Abraham Lincoln, knowing that there is a Truth above the advantage of the hour, argued from definition, on most occasions.

In the present civil war [he wrote in 1862], it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party. . . . The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time.

This is a long way from the big battalions; it is also a long way from Jacobin abstraction. Lincoln's strength, and his conservatism, did not arise from an affection for the excluded middle, which he called a "sophistical contrivance." He knew that what moved him was a power from without himself; and, having served God's will according to the light that was given him, he received the reward of the last full measure of devotion.

VICTORIAN AGNOSTICS AND WORDSWORTH

By

KATHARINE CHORLEY

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING and perhaps surprising characteristics of nineteenth-century agnosticism in England is the profound feeling, almost of veneration, which, throughout the century, so many of the Victorian agnostics had for the poetry of Wordsworth. His appeal went deeper than the response which their own love for wild nature gave to his portrayal of natural beauty. They probe below this and feed from him at the level where his own contact with nature transcends itself and becomes a profound spiritual experience of life. Reflecting on his poetry and his influence, they often use language bordering on the language of religion.

Matthew Arnold, who finished by reducing God to a "stream of tendency" or a "power not ourselves making for righteousness," but whose disillusioned gaze was not tricked, at any rate until well after the turn of the century, by any mirage of assured "progress," wrote some significant memorial verses at the time of Wordsworth's death in 1850. In this poem, he contrasts him with Goethe, who knew how to diagnose human suffering and weakness and evil but had no constructive plan for happiness except—if this, says Arnold sadly, be happiness—to stand apart from the flux and escape into the truth of art, and also with Byron who, he says, taught little but held spectators spell-bound by the exhibition of passion struggling with eternal law; whereas Wordsworth:

Found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke and loosed our hearts in tears

.

Our youth returned for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd
The freshness of the early world.

And he sums up Wordsworth's touch as unique in its power to heal. Time, he says, may produce another mind of Goethe's capacity or Byron's force:

But where will Europe's later hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?

Nearly twenty years later, Arnold chose and edited a volume of Wordsworth's poems. The preface which he wrote for this book is more critical as befits an analysis, but in substance his estimate of Wordsworth's value remains similar though it appears now as a unique capacity to distil satisfying joy from the contemplation of nature and the common life of men.

In an essay on Wordsworth's ethics, Leslie Stephen wrote: "Other poetry becomes trifling when we are making our inevitable passages through the valley of the shadow of death; Wordsworth's alone retains its power." George Eliot found *The Prelude* full of material for a "daily liturgy." William Hale White (Mark Rutherford) relates how as a youth of eighteen he took up a volume of Wordsworth and read:

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her. . . .

The lines, he says, signalled the approach of a new capacity which altered his whole life:

There awoke in me an aptness for the love of natural beauty, a possibility of being excited to enthusiasm by it and of deriving a secret joy from it sufficiently strong to make me careless of the world and its pleasures. Another effect which Wordsworth had upon me, and has had on other people, was the modification, altogether unintentional on his part, of religious belief. He never dreams of attacking anybody for his creed, and yet it often becomes impossible for those who study him and care for him to be members of any religious community. At any rate it would have been impossible in the town of Bedford. His poems imply a living God, different from the artificial God of the Churches. The revolution wrought by him goes far deeper, and is far more permanent than any which is the

work of Biblical critics, and it was Wordsworth and not German research which caused my expulsion from New College. . . .

Hale White had been brought up as a Calvinist Dissenter, was training for the ministry, and the New College to which he refers was a theological institution in St. John's Wood. He was expelled on some undefined charge of Evangelical unorthodoxy.

Another significant witness is John Morley. In his essay on Wordsworth, Morley concludes that:

Wordsworth's claim, his special gift, his lasting contribution lies in the extraordinary strenuousness, sincerity and insight with which he first idealizes and glorifies the vast universe around us, and then makes of it, not a theatre on which men play their parts, but an animate presence, intermingling with our works, pouring its companionable spirit about us and "breathing grandeur upon the very humblest face of human life."

And in a diary note of 1891 he writes:

Read *Excursion*. The last half of Book IV is among the finest things in great poetry. It is real religion. Some saint who knows how to write might do worse than try his hand at putting the doctrine of it in a prose reverie.

Testimony to this strange influence of Wordsworth on these men who formed the temper of Victorian agnosticism could be multiplied, but it will be sufficient to call one more witness, perhaps the most interesting of all, John Stuart Mill. It is not possible to understand fully the tremendous impact made upon Mill by his reading of Wordsworth as a young man, and the special value which he came to put upon Wordsworth's poetry outside the context of the devastating psychological circumstances of his upbringing. Everyone is aware that his father began to teach him Greek at the age of three, but the development of his education, exclusively under his father's ruling and guidance, may be less well known. It was not so much that he suffered an intellectual forcing sometimes fantastically beyond the capacity of his years. This he thinks did him little harm. The serious trouble was that during all the formative years of childhood and boyhood his intellect was stretched and trained at the expense of every other faculty; spontaneous affection, emotion, imagination, aesthetic appreciation, physical skills were stunted from the outset of his life. He had no friends or playfellows of his

own age. He never played games. The régime included daily leisure but no set holidays lest he should acquire habits of mental idleness. The ideal set for him was that he should grow up a human thinking machine motivated by the passionless calculating ethics of utilitarianism. Unlike most of the Victorian agnostics, he did not lose a religion; he had been brought up without religion and made to feel as a child that he was an isolated being in this regard, since his father demanded that he should keep this aspect of his upbringing so far as possible to himself in any social contacts lest it should produce awkward situations and stand against him. Obviously, the father sacrificed much in order to give the time and energy to teach and train his son, but the sacrifice was made without warmth or tenderness and Mill admits that though he respected his father he did not love him and was afraid of him. But Mill was not naturally a mere thinking machine. He had a strong romantic strain and an almost unmanageable capacity for sentimental love, as is shown by the character of his later relationship with Mrs. Taylor. As child and boy, it might have been expected that he would turn to his mother to get the release he needed through a mutual give and take of expressed feeling. But in an unpublished passage of his *Autobiography* he discloses that he did not or could not turn to his mother:

That rarity in England, a really warm-hearted mother would in the first place have made my father a totally different being and in the second would have made the children grow up loving and being loved. But my mother with the very best intentions only knew how to pass her life in drudging for them. Whatever she could do for them she did and they liked her because she was kind to them but to make herself loved or looked up to or even obeyed, required qualities which she unfortunately did not possess. I thus grew up in the absence of love and in the presence of fear.

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that at the age of twenty, Mill suffered a complete collapse of spirits. His depression went far deeper than mere adolescent mood. It seemed to him that everything for which he had shaped his life had become unfructifying and dead, incapable of generating either happiness or incentive. In particular, he felt that his heart was dead. In this condition, he tells how he read Marmontel's *Memoirs* and came to the passage in which Marmontel

relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family and the sudden inspiration by which he, a mere boy, felt and made them feel that he would be everything to them. . . . A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. . . . I was no longer hopeless, I was not a stock or a stone.

It does not take much psychological insight to perceive that Mill's relief was really due to his having projected himself and his own family into this scene. Because he could weep for the Marmontels, a sense of guilt for his own inability to love was vicariously removed. Moreover, his depression had been further complicated, perhaps unconsciously to himself, by the first imperious claims of his own personality. Somehow, he had to escape from his father's moral and intellectual domination. About the former, he notes in the same discarded portion of the *Autobiography* already quoted:

I was so much accustomed to be told what to do either in the form of direct command or of rebuke for not doing it that I acquired the habit of leaving my responsibility as a moral agent to rest on my father and my conscience never speaking to me except by his voice.

Probably Mill never altogether succeeded in conquering the habit of dependence. This at least seems the only plausible explanation of the almost grovelling submission of the findings of his intellect and his moral judgment to the verdicts of Mrs. Taylor which emerges from their correspondence.

It was shortly after the Marmontel episode that Mill discovered Wordsworth, at a stage of life therefore when the disastrous circumstances of his upbringing had just come to a head like some abscess threatening to poison his whole system. The Marmontel reading burst the abscess; the discovery of Wordsworth cleaned and went far to heal the wound. He had come upon the Miscellaneous Poems in the two volume edition of 1815. He says that he had looked into *The Excursion* two or three years previously and found little in it. He had also read through the whole of Byron during the worst period of his depression in the hope that a poet whose special province was supposed to be the culture of intense feeling would have power to rouse some feeling in his reader. He says:

As might be expected I got no good from this reading, but the

reverse. . . . His Harold and Manfred had the same burden on them which I had. . . . But while Byron was exactly what did not suit my condition, Wordsworth was exactly what did. . . . In the first place, these poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery. . . . But Wordsworth would never have had any great effect upon me, if he had merely placed before me beautiful pictures of natural scenery. . . . What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings that I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness. . . . I found that he, too, had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting, but that he had sought for compensation, and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it. The result was that I gradually but completely emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it.

The testimonies of these various witnesses whose lives span the century would be sufficiently interesting in themselves as judgments on Wordsworth, but in fact they imply a far wider commentary on the witnesses' own states of mind and set the terms of a fascinating problem in the understanding of Victorian agnostic thought. For these Victorian agnostics are valuing Wordsworth and drawing nourishment from him at the level of his spiritual experience, experience which in Wordsworth's own terms of reference to God they could scarcely regard as valid. It is indeed a strange position—the agnostics seeking solace and strength from a source which is essentially religious. How could this come about and why should they feel this yearning need? Here is the problem which their use of Wordsworth uncovers.

They were not completely easy in the agnostic saddle. The term "agnostic," coined by Huxley so late as 1869 to define their intellectual position, suggests as much. Meditating on the common factor in the mentalities of his varied religious opponents in the

newly formed Metaphysical Society, Huxley had realized that the basic difference between him and them was that

they were sure that they had attained a certain *gnosis*, had more or less successfully solved the problem of existence; while I was quite sure I had not, and had a pretty strong conviction that the problem was insoluble.

Hence, he invented the word "agnostic" to designate the position of those who like himself believed that positive explanations of the riddle of the universe were so much moonshine. The position therefore was essentially negative. So long as they adhered to the terms of the definition they were debarred from a positive and constructive approach to the ultimate problems of existence. But these are problems which goad and nag the underlying layers of sensitive and thoughtful minds however summarily they may appear to have been swept from the surface scene as unanswerable. Moreover, it is not possible to draw vital sustenance from a negative. Almost certainly it was the blighting effect of this negative position from which he could never extricate himself, that halted the development of Arthur Hugh Clough. It seems a law of our minds that we require some positive belief as a driving force for thought and action. In France, for instance, Comte had produced the strange contraption of his Positivist Church, but though the agnostics counted themselves as sympathetic to parts of his system, the movement never caught on among them. Mill, for example, came to see many of its dangers and fallacies clearly enough. In Germany, Nietzsche had substituted his doctrine of the super-man for Christianity, but Carlyle's Heroes scarcely begin to fill the Nietzschean mould. On the whole, the Englishmen laid hold of the idea of progress and used that for driving force. It was a conception that, after the turn of the century, was beginning to exert all the insidious and insistent pressure of a prevailing wind of opinion—in contrast to the sense of emptiness and frustration which had characterized so many sensitive minds in the earlier decades of the era. Matthew Arnold is a case in point. The blend of frustration and sad stoicism which runs through his first volume of poems gives place in his later prose to a kind of unsure clutching at the notion of progress, unsure because he seems to feel he may be grasping a shadow. Others were more certain of the reality of their hold. Indeed, the

idea of progress had much to commend it as a driving force for thought and action since it could engage both emotion and imagination and in that small corner of the world from which the English agnostics came appearances were strong in its favour. But it had one fatal defect. It was a social rather than a personal ideal. It could not provide adequate sustenance for a man's private life, for what Mill called the culture of the feelings and the perennial sources of happiness. Mill, unconsciously, put a finger on the flaw, the lack of staying power in an exclusively social ideal, in a pathetic letter on the subject of loneliness which he wrote to John Sterling as a young man of twenty-two:

By loneliness I mean the absence of that feeling which has accompanied me through the greater part of my life, that which one fellow traveller, or one fellow soldier, has towards another—the feeling of being engaged in the pursuit of a common object, and of mutually cheering one another on, and helping one another in an arduous undertaking. This, which after all is one of the strongest ties of individual sympathy, is at present, so far as I am concerned, suspended at least, if not entirely broken off.

What, I think, Mill is trying to express here is that such comradeship in pursuit of social aims in spite of its exhilaration cannot give a ground on which a man may come to terms with his life and does not even by itself give a true and permanent personal relationship.

Hence, for reasons such as those suggested, the idea of progress was inadequate to fill the void which the agnostics had created for themselves. The difficulty would be further increased for those of them who, like George Eliot and Matthew Arnold, were endowed with a deep religious sense which they could neither suppress nor properly fulfil. With George Eliot, what her biographer Cross calls her emphatically religious mind showed in her sympathetic comprehension of other people's religious needs. And for herself, she probably eased, if she could not solve, the conflict between the imperious rejections of her intellect and the yearning of her spirit by the creation in her novels of deep and delicate religious characters, such as Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch* and Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede*. Acton called her books the emblem of a generation distracted between the intense need of believing and the difficulty of beliefs. Matthew Arnold spent years of his life demolishing dogmatic Christianity

and then trying to build with the ruins a religion free from all dogma; but it is a religion in which the boundary between subjective emotion and objective reality is so confused and ill-defined that we are left wondering whether in fact he ever dared to draw this boundary even for himself. Did he in fact accept the objective existence of something that we may call God, or was his God a mere verbal projection of religious feeling? Such phrases as a "stream of tendency" seem devices to escape a firm conclusion either way. Moreover, Arnold believed that for the masses ethics and morality required a religious sanction and that therefore the myth of Christianity must be kept alive as a working creed. He could not accept frankly either the logic or the consequences of the agnostic position. Indeed, much of the apparent confusion of his later thought is probably due to the very clear-sightedness with which he saw and dreaded the effect of agnosticism as a solvent of civilization. His conflict of mind emerges with a clarity of which he may not have been fully aware himself in that almost unbearably moving poem *Obermann Once More*. It lies between the poles of two stanzas:

No thoughts that to the world belong
Had stood against the wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
From Christ's then open grave.

And,

Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town
And on his grave, with shining eyes
The Syrian stars look down.

The others of our group were not uneasy agnostics in the sense George Eliot and Arnold were, yet if we listen carefully for the overtones in their writings we catch echoes from that spiritual conception of life which they could never completely destroy in themselves. It is as if the echoes played about the void created by the agnostic position which substitutes had failed to fill, and called for some kind of spiritual food to maintain the driving force and vitality of an interior life.

This, then, was the role of Wordsworth in their lives. He showed them the means of acquiring a spiritual food which they could assimilate.

A deep love for wild nature was a marked characteristic of the Victorian agnostics and it was this that first drew them to Wordsworth. In particular they shared his love for mountain country. Mill, for instance, says that his first attraction came from Wordsworth's scenes being mostly set in mountain country which ever since he had spent some months near the Pyrenees as a boy had been his ideal of natural beauty. The feeling was deeper and richer in quality than the various kinds of pleasure which, ever since the mid-eighteenth century, it had become the fashion to win from wild nature. It had nothing in common with the eighteenth-century pastime of searching out the "picturesque" qualities of a mountain scene in order to play with nature the game of art, nor with that other eighteenth-century pastime of contemplating mountains from a safe distance in order to work up pleasing emotions of horror without the too real accompaniment of physical danger. It was at a deeper level even than the fresh spontaneous joy with which Dorothy Wordsworth observed details of natural beauty and caught them living into her *Journal* with swift words. Its special quality was a kind of contemplation issuing in satisfaction and serenity and a type of spiritual happiness. John Morley expresses it in a comment on Leslie Stephen's *Alpine Essays*:

... Stephen's three or four Alpine pieces have a ray divine that is all their own, and they wear well, as he says of Wordsworth, because they rest on solid substance. They rest on the association of a personified sublimity in mountain nature, with the awe, reverence, hope, love, that mark the highest nature in man. . . . These terrible eternal presences led him to a manful lesson all the more wonderful for a man walking in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

This approach to nature was Wordsworth's particular preserve. He reflected upon it, developed it, expressed it more profoundly than any of his contemporaries, even than Coleridge. In his poetry, therefore, the agnostics found their own kind of love for nature and satisfaction from nature expressed with the depth and clarity of imaginative power. This was the initial ground of his appeal. But Wordsworth's nature poetry went far beyond the contemplation of nature. He used the fruits of his contemplation for a criticism and interpretation of all life. And a criticism and interpretation that was in terms of a spiritual order transcending the physical order of being. Wordsworth's interpretation of life

was in fact always based on belief in a transcendental God whose medium of communication with mankind was love. But he seldom states this in definite terms—he was neither theologian nor formal philosopher and would never constrict the expression of his beliefs within the framework of a system—and in his most profound nature poetry, where he is pre-occupied with the problems and manifestations of being and experiencing insights which bring him near to a mystical apprehension of the Being of God, he is necessarily hampered by the inadequacy of language which has to body forth by means of figure and symbol a spiritual experience. Hence there is often an appearance in his most deeply felt thought of hesitancy, as if he would not commit himself regarding God to much more than speculation, as if he would not commit himself to defining the respective limits of subjective experience and objective reality. As if he were content to leave God as “the force not ourselves making for righteousness,” or “the stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being.” It was such lines as “A Presence which disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts” which the agnostics could use and through which they could experience a quasi-religious emotion without committing themselves to any estimate of its objective truth. In fact, Matthew Arnold invokes Wordsworth and this line of his to explain the standpoint of George Sand—which was very near his own—who, he tells us, never lost her religious sense with her loss of faith in the God of the popular creeds but was able to maintain it without being more precise about the divine nature than Wordsworth in the line quoted. This kind of interpretation of Wordsworth enabled the agnostics to feel at home with much of his thought and to gain a spiritual satisfaction from it.

There was, too, another approach which could make their road appear to converge with his. We can get a clue to this in Morley's choice of the IVth Book of *The Excursion* as the climax of Wordsworth's thought. This book, which Wordsworth called “Despondency Corrected,” builds up to the Wanderer's confession of faith in man's capacity to redeem himself through communion with nature and to distil from nature a pure principle of love which he can apply in all his commerce with his fellow men. Wordsworth was at heart a Pelagian. All through his life, even during his long Christian years, he never seems fully to

have grasped either intellectually or imaginatively man's essential need of divine grace in order to raise himself. He assumes man's capacity to raise and redeem himself, not certainly in a Godless world, but without the necessity for God's specific intervention. Example, and the God-given world of nature, is enough for a man if he chooses to follow the first and put himself into harmony with the second. This is the theme of the IVth Book, and the emphasis is on the redemptive action of intercourse with nature. Now it is clear that Wordsworth's influence upon these agnostics had a redemptive quality—both Mill and Hale White make this clear—and it was his Pelagianist approach that made it possible for them to follow him without involving themselves in a Christian conception of redemption which they could not accept. He gave them an opening to find in his thought at once a guarantee and a discipline for human progress, and progress through the life lived by individuals, not solely through a collective social ideal. They could draw upon his essential optimism, his deep feeling for humanity, his ethical interpretation of life, his depiction of what Mill calls "the perennial sources of happiness"; and the draught came to them not by means of a logically reasoned philosophy which challenges analysis and judgment in the clear cold light of the intellect, but insistent with the living warmth and density of imaginative power. Hence they could by-pass without collision those aspects of Wordsworth's actual intellectual position which were inimical to them and use the Wordsworth ethos in their own lives with something of the fertilizing power of a positive religion.

His insistence on the essentially ethical interpretation of life was particularly important to them. "Wordsworth," says Morley, "went higher and further, striving not only to move the sympathies of the heart, but to enlarge the understanding, and exalt and widen the spiritual vision, all with the aim of leading us towards firmer and austerer self-control." And here they could swim easily with the current of his thought. For the Victorian agnostics—as distinct from some of the Secularists—were not prepared to throw overboard traditional ethics either in the context of their personal lives or as a social ideal. Leslie Stephen's outlook is specially interesting at this point. Intellectually, Stephen realized that a logical consequence of the agnostic position was that agnosticism must construct an ethical

system for itself from its own premisses; and he proposed to attempt this within the framework of Evolution. His book *Science and Ethics* is the result of this attempt, and it is significant of his seriousness that this is the book by which he would most have liked to be remembered. Nevertheless, his essay on Wordsworth's Ethics which, unlike so much of his writing, maintains throughout a tone of unselfconscious and heartfelt sincerity, makes it clear that his own working ethics, the concepts by which he lived, are not a new construction but coloured through and through emotionally by many of the traditional ethical concepts of Christendom, and also by a sort of stoicism which is not altogether alien to the Christian conception of suffering and which runs through much of Wordsworth's own thought. He could therefore take Wordsworth as his practical master. It is not the concept of evolution that he tells us will help us through those inevitable passages through the Valley of the Shadow of Death—but Wordsworth's power as prophet and moralist. Wordsworth's strong tincture of Pelagianism is obviously an important factor in his sympathetic appeal.

From a different angle, the same deep affinity for Wordsworth's ethical outlook may be seen in Mill. In his letters, throughout his life, there are a number of references to Christianity which suggest that he was sensitive to values which in fact derive from a spiritual foundation for ethics and have no logical place in any adaptation of utilitarianism; in particular he shows an enduring reverence for the personality and teaching of Christ as an example and guide to the good life. For him, as for Arnold, St. Paul is the great corrupter of Christianity since he smothered the simplicity of Christ's own moral teaching beneath the artificial complications of theology. Mill's feeling for Christ could have taken him straight to the heart of Wordsworth's own Christology had he chosen to deepen and expand it; for again and again Wordsworth stresses in letters and conversation that his love and worship goes out to Christ primarily as teacher and exemplar, as manifestor in His own person of truth and love.

These men who found in Wordsworth's thought at once a solace and the incentive of an active ideal were among the leaders of Victorian agnosticism. Thus his influence must have had an important effect upon its quality. On the one hand, he encouraged and deepened underlying attitudes of mind which

essentially derive from a spiritual conception of life, and on the other he supplied or strengthened a working philosophy into whose texture Christian threads have been woven like a strong warp, a philosophy which therefore retained many of the values and ideals of Christianity. This philosophy did much to fill the void created by the expulsion of religious belief and filled it with a Christian-tinctured content. Hence, Victorian agnosticism in comparison with its Continental counterpart seems gentle and sober, and retains values which agnostic and believer can hold in common. Thus the cleavage between them has never bred in this country the same violence of opposition, nor has it extended itself to the realm of politics and social ideals. The English agnostics might attack Christian dogmas with all the weapons at their command and sometimes, like Stephen, with a singular lack of comprehension of what they are attacking, but at the same time they never cut the lines of communication with Christian civilization. It is not perhaps asserting too much to say that Wordsworth's influence acting upon their own deep needs kept these lines of communication open. And in the last resort it was the curious onesidedness of his survey of nature which made this possible. "Nature red in tooth and claw" is altogether alien to his mood. He may on occasion refer to violent aspects of nature and their effect on men, but he seldom *realizes* these aspects in his poetry, and so the fruit of reflection and contemplation does not grow out of them. Nor was he subject, except occasionally in boyhood, to those weird and irrational influences from natural objects which in certain conditions affect those who experience them with what seems a preternatural force. His vision of nature was sometimes stern yet always beneficent. And the contemplation of nature generated in him moral and spiritual impulses from which he built up that philosophy of life which in its simplest terms embraces all human lives in a bond of love and duty. He thought and wrote before theories of evolution based on the survival of the fittest had made it seem philosophically irrational to draw this moral inspiration from nature. Huxley said that he saw no trace of moral purpose in nature. Nor was Wordsworth troubled by the new disillusion of the apparent insignificance of man seen in the context of a universe illimitable in space and almost endless in time, the disillusion which gnaws at Tennyson's heart in *The Two Voices*.

The Victorian agnostics were certainly aware of all this, but they did not feel that the limitation in Wordsworth's survey of nature dwarfed the value of his teaching. Wordsworth's nature is largely symbolic and can be separated without contradiction from the factual nature of the scientists. And it was the fruit of his symbolism formed by the very limitations of his survey which they needed as a medicine, both healing and tonic. But in using him thus they admitted unconsciously that the heart has reasons which the discursive reason, working on the narrowly selected premisses presented to it by the sciences, cannot discern or satisfy.

EROS AND AGAPE

By

T. S. GREGORY

THE SON OF MAN came not to send peace on the earth but a sword. Theological controversy pervades the New Testament from the Epistle to the Galatians to the Gospel of St. John. It was the most conspicuous preoccupation of the Christian Fathers, and when most other literature failed it endured through the barbarian centuries. With the Aristotelian revival it reached a zenith. It is the inspiration of the *Contra Gentes* and determines the form of the *Summa Theologica*. Yet it is not the characteristic expression of faith. There is also prayer. One main achievement of the scholastic revolution was to define the sphere of controversy so as to deliver analytical reason from devout prejudice and to discern what can from what cannot be profitably disputed. The violation of this frontier released confusion once more, so that God became as disputable as a party programme and philosophy was required to substitute for the Ineffable whom men worship a divine Idea which they can analyse, a god according to human specification. In answer to

this synthetic deity the devout Protestant reaffirmed his faith in a "kingdom that is not of this world" and reconstructed the history of the Christian Church as if it had no right to be human at all, almost as if God had never created man and could do nothing with his humanity but quench it. There is no room for Eros in Agape.

Dr. Nygren's book on Eros and Agape has been influential for twenty years. We now need only to thank Professor Watson and the S.P.C.K. for having made it completely available to English readers in an admirable and authorized translation, lucid, readable and equipped with its full complement of notes and indices¹. It arrives in England as four hundred years ago Reformation theology arrived with the returning exiles from Basle and Strasbourg and is one voice of a vigorous Protestant revival. No one acquainted with the late history of German Protestantism will be tempted to doubt the reality of its faith. No Catholic will fail to regret the confusion of its utterance, a confusion audible in Germany before Luther was born between the divine and human, between the language of prayer and the language of controversy.

This is the least appropriate moment in Christian history for any assessment of Martin Luther, so much work is in process, so much has still to be done before the true meaning of that vast indecisive utterance can be made articulate. Dr. Nygren is not an historian, but he is a Lutheran and he uses Luther as some theorists use Thomas to enforce a foregone conclusion—only that Luther's intention was not conclusive. A paradox, therefore, underlies this book, and becomes explicit in the final chapter on Luther and the Reformation, as follows:

The deepest import of the great religious revolution that occurred in the Reformation might be summed up briefly by saying that in this event theocentric religion reasserted itself. In his campaign against Catholic Christianity, Luther is governed by a completely uniform tendency. . . . Luther insists in opposition to all ego-centric forms of religion upon a purely theocentric relation to God. In Catholic piety he finds a tendency which he cannot help regarding as a complete perversion of the inmost meaning of religion, the ego-centric tendency.

¹ *Agape and Eros*, by Anders Nygren. Complete authorized translation by Philip S. Watson (S.P.C.K. 35s.).

This to the "common reader" seems a paradox indeed. Recalling Dr. Schweitzer's account of Protestant Christology from Reimarus to Wrede, he rubs his eyes and wonders whether this can be the story of a theocentric religion—even if he waives the difficulty of divining what can be meant by a "purely theocentric relation to God." Then, too, the most obvious and in many respects most attractive feature of Martin Luther had seemed to be his magnificent egoism. His idiom, at least, is full of ego. Thomas Aquinas and John of the Cross rarely mention themselves. The things they have to say make ego-centric attention irrelevant if not impossible, and their obedience to the Church is itself a discipline in self-effacement. But Luther reads as if Luther and what Luther thinks and feels were Luther's consuming interest. And this is what many people find most lovable in him. This man of the German people who did not believe in pretending to be disinterested is loved for his self's sake more widely and constantly than he is understood or accepted for his doctrine. He was, after all, the leader and inspiration of a movement which seemed intent upon shattering a world-wide institution of a thousand years. Dr. Nygren calls it a Copernican revolution. On the authority of Luther's conscience and conviction he proclaimed (and Dr. Nygren agrees with him) that a very great deal of Christian wisdom was human error and not a little Christian sanctity was human sin. Such a vocation surely required an ego built on heroic proportions, a louder voice and more aggressive intention than, say, reforming the Carmelites, founding the Oratory, or dying "the King's good servant but God's first."

Behind this paradox is another more searching. Take, for example, two of Dr. Nygren's judgments—on Augustine and Dante.

In Augustine [he says] there is a blending of motifs on a large scale. He has done more than any other by combining things Neoplatonic and Christian, to import the Eros motif into Christianity and to procure ecclesiastical sanction for it. It was not without reason that Karl Holl described Augustine as one of the corrupters of Christian morality. If Augustine's view is judged by the primitive Christian idea of Agape, only one verdict is possible: the Christian idea of love has suffered seriously through being combined with the Neoplatonic Eros motive.

This "corruption" Dr. Nygren finds persisting through the history of medieval Christendom. So Dante.

What kind of love is Dante talking about? Has it the essential traits of Eros or of Agape? The best answer is given by Dante himself (*Paradiso* xxvi). . . . It is the nature of the good always to kindle love and to draw love to itself. The greater the goodness is, the greater the love that is awakened by it. Consequently God, who comprises in Himself all reality and all goodness so that every other good that exists is merely a reflection of His goodness must exercise a greater power of attraction than all else. In theory human insight alone should bring us to love God, the highest and the absolute Good.

This, according to Dr. Nygren, is all Eros. Only at the end is offered a concession to Agape, namely, "that in real life this love only comes into being by the help of divine grace." This entrance of grace as a *deus ex machina* is all that the *Paradiso* concedes to divine Agape.

These two passages illustrate Dr. Nygren's contention. Whatever strives upward and seeks the good is human and Eros, the Aristotelian, Platonist, Neoplatonist thing. Thus in the Mystical Life of Moses, Gregory of Nyssa reveals an "unequivocal tendency" to seek an "ascent," and in his work on the Beatitudes speaks of the "spiritual mountain." He desires a "ladder" or "wings" to ascend to the Beloved. The same aspiring humanism is visible in the doctrine of merit, and though Dr. Nygren repudiates the crude and demonstrably false criticism of the medieval doctrine which has been one staple of Lutheran apologetic, namely, that it made grace insignificant and magical, he substitutes his own criticism of it, that after all Aquinas thinks of merit as the end and grace only as the means. Merit is not divine but human, and to regard divine grace as an instrument of human, that is, of *my* perfection is the mark of an ego-centric not theocentric religion. It is Neoplatonist and erotic, and therefore not what Christ meant at all or, to be more precise, not what Paul meant by Agape. The Christian Agape is divine. It cannot "yearn" like the mortal Eros. It cannot strive upwards. Already in the form of God, it empties itself. It comes down from heaven. Spontaneous and unmotivated it gives itself to the unworthy. It loves for no reason but that God is love. It thus produces what Hellenic Eros with its aristocratic value-judgment

could never have inspired, the love of neighbour. (Here we can imagine Gilbert Murray's astonishment enforced by a stream of quotation ending, perhaps, with the aspiration of Eusebius the Platonist which is "addressed to no personal god" but "is pure prayer," or for our own part wonder what name Dr. Nygren would give to the enormous benevolence which played so great a part in the economy of the pagan empire.) With these two mutually exclusive and opposed "ideas" of love, Dr. Nygren can detect the paganization or ego-centredness that infected Catholic Christianity with its human substitute for Agape.

This, whether it be Luther or not (and I think it is not) is good Lutheran apologetic. Such an argument alone will sustain the thesis that the schisms of the sixteenth century were not accidentally natural but essentially holy, the thesis in other words that Catholic Christianity was not accidentally but essentially so corrupt that the true believer could do no other than break with it. Harnack saw but shirked the difficulties of this view, and Harnack does not satisfy Dr. Nygren. Language seems at first on his side, and it is tempting to surmise that the book reached conception and came to be written because these two words seemed to furnish a plausible antithesis. The word Eros does not occur in the New Testament; the word Agape appears in it more than a hundred times and with a peculiar and Christian meaning. God is Agape. Moreover, if I have not Agape, not even faith, gnosis, martyrdom, prophecy and giving all my goods to the poor is of any avail. Without Agape, God would not be God and I am nothing. Eros on the other hand was never baptized or justified: the Gospel has no use for it. It exhibits no holy or even moral distinction. It is natural appetite whether for God or a harlot, the appetite of animals or of philosophers, of the cosmos for the unmoved Mover. Thus if we seek the differentia of true Christianity, there is a *prima facie* case for finding it here. Eros is all pagan. Agape is all Christian. And since nothing is more patent than that in its wide-extended mission the Catholic Church adopted much pagan wisdom, nothing is more obvious than that it profaned what it ought to have held sacred and confounded this essential and ultimate distinction.

The question, however, which Dr. Nygren does not by any means answer is whether it was to maintain this kind of "distinction" that God sent His Son into the world. Does Agape

which he would defend against Eros need, or can it even tolerate, such defence? Can it be made a controversial topic at all?

It seems too facile a trick of controversy to interpose the contrasted connotations of two Greek words as an iron curtain between God and Man. More than that, Agape submits to no such comparison, and if Dr. Nygren is right, admits no enmity.

Agape [he says] is indifferent to value. . . . Any thought of valuation whatever is out of place in connection with fellowship with God. . . . It is only when all thought of the worthiness of the object is abandoned that we can understand what Agape is. God's love allows no limits to be set for it by the character or conduct of man.

No limits at all, we hasten to agree: not even hell is beyond its compass and certainly not human Eros or "Clement's Eros piety." Man's character and conduct do not limit God's love: they are "infinitely valuable" because of it. Divine Love is the source of human value as of human existence. We can never *understand* what Agape is, for understanding must have objects and cannot but make judgments of value. Dr. Nygren declares against Harnack that "the idea of the infinite value of the human soul is by no means a central idea of Christianity. . . . Harnack's statement that 'all who bear a human face are of more value than the whole world' shows very clearly that the thought of an infinite of this kind as belonging to man by nature has its roots elsewhere than in Christianity." But then, so has the idea of Christianity, a nickname of pagan origin, and so has the idea of "nature" and the word "idea" itself. Christ uses a speech of non-Christian invention. His title of Christ was accepted or claimed, but not originated by the Nazarene and His apostles. The *historical* roots of an idea must be sought in history, and language, since the Son of God condescended to use it cannot be disinfected of its human association.

Language, having tempted Dr. Nygren with so clear a *Sic et Non* becomes his insuperable difficulty. "Theocentric religion," for instance. Religion is not divine but human, even pagan. The word so translated occurs in the New Testament four times, twice where Paul refers to the Jews' religion which he has discarded and twice in the Epistle of James to signify moral behaviour or pretension. Religion is a human thing, a child of Eros which Agape accepted, saved and sanctified by the discipline

which Dr. Nygren judges to be a Catholic perversion, by the "scale of meditation," "ladder of perfection," "summit of humanity," the "wings" or "mountain" of "ascent" which all betray the infection of Neoplatonism in medieval spirituality, and above all by the "caritas" (man's love for God) which was Augustine's synthetic substitute for Agape. These all were forms of "religion," and to that extent and in that sense precisely were not purely theocentric. But religion took more popular forms, and these, we cannot but suspect Dr. Nygren dislikes with an aristocratic disapproval worthy of Plato himself. *Minne-piety* for instance is "a strongly sensual and weakly sentimental idea," and Suso "at once both minnesinger and monk," whose "spiritual love for God is clothed in forms reminiscent of the secular love-lyric," repels Dr. Nygren in a way that Agape would not be repelled. Even the passion-mysticism of Bernard, Suso, Tauler, the *Imitatio*, the *Theologia Germanica*, was "neutralized" by a "bride mysticism" which "brings it into alarming proximity with *Minne-piety*." "The sensual, and still more, the sentimental strain in *Minne-piety* encroaches upon and inundates Passion mysticism also, giving its meditation on and love for Christ features that are all too human." When it suits his controversial purpose Dr. Nygren will ascribe this rejection of the "all too human" to the Neoplatonist Eros, and indeed it is no more "purely theocentric" than the sentimental piety which it disapproves.

Now if Luther had abolished religion he might have discovered something purely theocentric. Such was the intent of the Münster Anabaptists, of the more implacable Quietists, of Calvinism in its lonelier forms, and of some modern revivals of Brahman mysticism. But all these forms of intense religion reject, sometimes passionately reject, large tracts of "all too human" experience. All are guilty of value-judgment, or of apatheia, of the "scale" or "ladder" of ascent, and all alike illustrate the radical difficulty of Dr. Nygren's thesis. What does "theocentric" mean? It appears only in contrast with "ego-centric" or "anthropo-centric" in minds that are not divine and for purposes that are not devout: it belongs to the comparative study of theology, and of natural theology at that. In one sense, everything is theocentric and could not otherwise exist. In another, nothing is theocentric except the Persons of the Trinity. Apart from these extreme tautologies, "theocentric" can be significant

only of a human attitude. Synthesis of some kind we cannot escape. Even the language of Dr. Nygren's devotion is all anthropomorphic. "Just as God's love," he says, "is not appetitive longing, but signifies that God graciously wills to take man despite his unworthiness into fellowship with Himself, so man's love for God signifies that man moved by Divine Love gratefully wills to belong wholly to God." This is the operation of Agape, the language of the heart and of devotion. Yet its operative words are all Eros. Gratitude is an emotion familiar to Homer and Socrates. It inspired many pagan monuments and sepulchral inscriptions. Only an Hellenic judgment of what is fitting or noble will venture to decide whether the object of Divine Love is worthy or unworthy. But when in his prayers Dr. Nygren realizes his own unworthiness, it is not a judgment based on evidence, but the religious passion of a human ego prostrate before the Holy. The ego is present in the transaction, the same ego who will remember the ineffable moment from the mundane circumstances of writing a book about theology, and try to expound what no human thought can reach. As he remembers and simultaneously wrestles with Greek and grammar, ink and the reader, will it be a Neoplatonist corruption to say that he loves God, or the mark of an ego-centric religion to desire "to be clothed upon that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life"? "Now he," says the Apostle, "that wrought us for this very thing is God who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit." The Apostle does not encourage the notion of a "purely theocentric" relation to God "who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption and eternal life." Remove the ego-centre from the first eight chapters of Romans, the human ego who desires to be righteous and finds he cannot, and there is nothing left. It would be idle to speak of Agape to men who knew neither Nomos nor Eros. Moreover, the Apostle will exhort the faithful to "seek the things that are above," "to set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth," and we could mark the parallels not only in Gregory of Nyssa and Bernard of Clairvaux but in Plotinus. But Paul's reasons are not of gratitude or even of divine *charis*, or worthiness or unworthiness, but the Resurrection.

This is no quibble. Without the synthesis which Dr. Nygren

deplores there could be no validity in the language which, being human, he is compelled to use. It is true that "Agape abideth when Gnosis, like everything else that is in part shall be done away," but then the significance of Dr. Nygren's argument will be done away too. The questions will all be answered in that simultaneous and beatific vision. But *now* we know in part, *now* we see through a glass darkly. And "*now* is the acceptable time." "This day is the Scripture fulfilled." The words "If ye love me, ye will keep my commands" are spoken in time, into human ears and for imperfect apprehensions, and it is from such part knowledge and darkened vision in this world of human Eros that the divine Agape has evoked human aspiration and human questions. It is a human question whether in "taking possession of man's innermost being" Agape destroys all that is specifically human or rather kindles this smoking flax and heals the bruised reed. For if human Eros is to be regarded not as partial and imperfect love which Agape fulfils but as an alien and independent energy which Agape will disown and abolish, then it must follow that the Divine Essence has a self-existent rival and God is not transcendent but related. Such theology will discredit not the Hellenistic mysteries but the ineffable Godhead of the Scriptures and translate us to Ormuzd and Ahriman.

And yet this would seem to be what Luther himself proclaimed in some of the passages Dr. Nygren quotes:

God wills to save us not by domestic but by extraneous righteousness and wisdom, not that which comes and springs from us, but that which comes from elsewhere into us, not that which originates in our earth, but that which comes down from heaven. Therefore it behoves us to be instructed in a righteousness altogether external and alien. Wherefore it is first necessary that our own and domestic righteousness should be rooted out.

Apart from the *non-sequitur*—for it cannot behove us to do the impossible, namely, to be instructed in the altogether alien—did Luther really mean this? If he found some good Hans or Fritz with a natural preference for truth, did he require the young man to seek salvation by becoming a liar, or demand of the naturally merciful a scrupulous training in cruelty? Here, as often, we divine Luther's meaning not through the literal precision of forensic reason but by an emotional sympathy. When he speaks thus, it is the self-abasement or even self-immolation of a lover

that inspires his paradox. The voice is the voice of Eros, not Agape,—of Eros at war with Nomos or Ethos in Luther's "all too human" experience. What he attacked with an exaggerated and unpractised self-denial was not our own righteousness, but the "idea" of righteousness to which and by which we hoped to justify ourselves. The works he hated were the works of the *poseur*, virtues registered to be seen of men and assessed for the practitioner's vainglory, and these he hated because they were a real temptation to him. He knew the dangers of a self-fantasy. The "idea" of sanctity, not realized and sublimated in action and suffering, but transferred from scientific analysis to a devout imagination and even to religious ambition was in the wrong place. It induced a conflict which he never resolved. Like all men aware of internal conflict he was awake to psychic mysteries, and sought his directions by indirections and he was right in telling himself that righteousness is lived not idolized, and life is God's gift not man's ingenuity. He had no objection to Eros. Quite the contrary. He preferred passionate sin to merely conceptual virtue. He was passionately and erotically certain that Eros must be saved by Agape and that ethical or theological fences making one inaccessible to the other must be demolished. With all his erotic fervour he repudiated the rational abstractions and intellectual controls which would have trammelled and extinguished the glory of human appetite in a formal perfection. But then unhappily he supposed that the Church was some such external form, and he sought a more erotic and less ethical road to Agape. This was the tragedy, for it produced all that his yearning intention would have avoided. Instead of accepting the hard ground of doctrine, he had to invent it. What should have been a flame of religious devotion became a conflagration of theological, political, academic and diplomatic controversy, and what ought to have been humility within the "all-sufficient love divine" developed into an elaborate formulation of the *idea* of omnipotent grace.

Dr. Nygren, in like manner, formulates the "idea of Agape." This is his constantly recurring phrase and yet his real adversary, like Luther's, is Idea, not Eros. He is still defining dogma, not explaining or realizing it. Now the formulation of ideas, the definition of objects and images, the recognition of likenesses and distinctions and all the business of lucid speech was the

supreme achievement of the Hellenic mind. It was the vocation of the Greeks to turn *sarx* into *logos*. They suffered also the defect of their quality and talked too much. Since from the days of Abelard and Gratian, Europe had been learning directly or indirectly from these incomparable masters how to be articulate, it was only to be expected that faith should be distracted or perverted or diluted here and there, by an excess of ideas and preoccupation with words and forms. Luther was no reformer in this sense. Even in his voluble century few men used so many words or expected so much from them or lived so constantly to serve them. Words have been overworked in Protestant and, above all, in German theology ever since. Without the priest it has relied too much on the professor, and the professor's business is not specifically worship but enquiry. He deals not in love but in ideas. The whole history of Protestant German theology and philosophy betrays an idealist confusion, a *lues academica*, the notion that God or Christ or history or the State or duty or the universe or man is Idea, that the Gospel is primarily a document containing words. In the nineteenth century, the most influential German thought conceives everything as an ideal process. When Nietzsche says that God is dead, he means the *idea* of God, but he also takes the idea for the reality. The tormented speech of German existentialism issues at once from the conviction that existence is more than idea, and the attempt to express this conviction as an idea. Dr. Nygren treats love as an idea, not as the act of loving (which is all that Eros is), but as an hypostasized abstraction which can be handled as a substantive in its own right; and of course Eros is neither hypostasis nor abstraction. Nor is Agape. The only point at which Agape can signify substance is as one of the names of Pure Act whose essence is His existence and cannot be contained in human predicate or revealed as an idea. No man has seen God at any time.

So Dr. Nygren feels, as Luther felt, an urge to transcend this ideal captivity, but it is the urge of Eros which can never be satisfied, for Agape has no scale of values and can find no fault, but Dr. Nygren is equally diligent in examining the texts and ingenious in detecting their heresy. They have only to be Catholic to be wrong. He finds fault with Dionysius for making distinctions and with Thomas for ignoring them. Consider, for

example, Richard of St. Victor's "proof" of the Trinity. This was based on the idea that love must not be "unordered." "The Divine person could not have the highest love towards a person who was not worthy of the highest love." So a second person was needed within the Deity in order that there might be an object on which the Divine love could be set without limit.

The vice of this argument is that it rests upon the erotic notion that "love must be guided by the worth of the object," whereas Agape would "leave the scale of values out of account." Now it must be said that Dr. Nygren has fundamentally misconceived Richard's meaning, and chiefly because of his century and his religious climate. Dr. Nygren thinks of "order" aesthetically; Richard thought of it ontologically. For Richard "inordinate love" is love that tells lies. It is not a thing to hate as men hate ugliness, but a thing to fear as men fear annihilation or monstrous disease. Nor did he set out to prove in any modern or Cartesian sense what he never doubted, the doctrine of the Trinity, but if God is love and God is truth and God is Trinity, then it must evidently and absolutely follow that between the Persons of the Trinity love is undeceived and undeceiving. If Agape leaves the scale of values out of account on any other terms than this, then Agape and Aletheia have parted company and we are left, not with any kind of love or any kind of Christ, but with one of the debased interpretations of *maya* which the wise have discarded. Dr. Nygren's real target is not Richard of St. Victor, but his own confusion of an aesthetic value-judgment with an existential affirmation. The dissatisfaction is not theological but erotic. Images belong to Eros, which judges aesthetically and everlastingly seeks to transcend them.

The impasse is as old as thought and has never found solution but in some form of sacrament nor can ever find *valid* solution but in a sacrament which, being very God, transcends image and idea, and being actual history is unique and unverifiable. The power or right to speak intelligible things of Agape rests upon the full, simultaneous satisfaction of those two conditions, for we speak as historical and related creatures of that which is unrelated and transcendent. Love is not hypostasized abstraction but act, and divine love is divine act. It transcends even the category of the miraculous, yet all the means men have to apprehend the divine act of love is their own act of love. The

language of heaven it is not lawful for a man to utter. Eros alone can recognize Agape—if Agape deigns to be recognized by men—Eros fulfilled and lost and sanctified in Agape and silent in the all-transcending Presence of adoration. Human words avail but to symbolize insufficiently man's love for God. The Word that can express God's love for man is begotten of His Father before all worlds. Not Luther nor Augustine nor Paul nor the Gospels can tell the story save under veils of sacramental and analogical idiom. Eros calls up images of its experience and they say, We are not He: He made us. The one thing, for example, that in their literal sense the Gospels express is the love of certain men for Christ Jesus. Whatever else these documents may be, they are indubitably what Christ enabled some men to think and speak about Him. They are the language of the Church of His vocation. They say that He became flesh and we beheld His glory, not extraneous flesh or undesirable glory. Such is the language of Eros. Is it anything more? And that is the question asked by Eros. The answer depends on what is meant by He, and whether the statement is true. If these ideas framed in human speech were the language also of divine Agape "shed abroad in their hearts," then what they beheld and their hands handled was the Word of life which is from the beginning. Flesh and blood revealed to Simon Peter the face of the Nazarene, but it was not flesh and blood that revealed the Son of the living God. If the testimony of Peter's eyesight cohered entirely with the divine revelation, so that in this one Person the inconceivable Subject of existence and the visible object of the fisherman's love were one and the same Being, then He made both one, and the *antithesis* between Eros and Agape, how vast soever the *difference* between them, can never have been valid.

Controversial purpose has no real place in Dr. Nygren's religion. His Lutheran devotion, indeed, like all devotion is worth any man's study, but controversy can be relevant only to hypothetical statements and you cannot be devout on an hypothesis. Nothing is illumined and much is obscured by comparing God with man, since no such comparison could mean anything but a false god-fantasy. Nor is it a legitimate use of the New Testament to expose the loop'd and window'd raggedness of man. If the complaint against Plotinus is only that he is human and cannot love as God loves, the complaint must be made also

against all that is human in the Gospel, and to be crucified, dead and buried is human. But it is better when from his far country the heathen seeks his way home, to see him afar off and run and welcome him and bring the best robe and put it on him, and rejoice and be merry. We have good authority to judge that such is the courteous manner of Agape, not to remember how the same prodigal devoured his patrimony with harlots, for after all it *was* his patrimony. If Christian love suffers, it is not from Plotinus, but from pride, and it is pride that makes man's unworthiness essential to divine love. If human Eros and a pagan tradition have taught a man to paint, he cannot harm the Last Supper by making it the subject of his masterpiece, but he can profane the Agape shed abroad in his heart by making divine grace the occasion of human contempt.

FIRST YEARS OF ATOMIC ENERGY¹

WE ARE LIVING at a time when the widespread and systematic application of science is exerting a profound and ever-increasing influence on the structure of society. It is only fifteen years since the phenomenon of nuclear fission was discovered, and in that time it has been instrumental in bringing a World War to an abrupt end and has ever since been a major factor in international politics. There are no signs that this influence will wane; on the contrary, it is likely that even if the danger of war should recede the employment of the energy of the atom in the service of man will cause even greater changes than the bomb itself. In these circumstances no one interested in world affairs can afford to be ignorant of these recent developments. As President Eisenhower said at the General Assembly of the United Nations, "The atomic age has moved forward at such a pace that every citizen of the world should have some comprehension, at least in comparative terms, of the extent of this development of the utmost significance to all of us."

It is therefore fortunate that Mr. Gordon Dean, who was Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission from 1950 to 1953 has written a book dealing clearly and authoritatively with the main outlines of the work on atomic energy in the United States. He begins his account with a description of the impact of the destruction of

¹ *Report on the Atom*, by Gordon Dean (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 16s.)

Hiroshima by an atomic bomb on world opinion and the anxious speculations which it stimulated. In view of the unprecedented situation existing at the end of the war, the Atomic Energy Commission was set up and strenuous efforts were made to secure the international control of atomic energy. These efforts were, as we all know, to prove unsuccessful. The United States consequently had no other choice but to renew her effort on the production of atomic weapons, while developing at the same time, so far as circumstances permitted, the peaceful uses of atomic energy. During these years the Atomic Energy Commission had to tackle many complex problems involving the whole economy of the United States, and requiring the construction of vast new factories and the development of many entirely new technical processes bristling with formidable difficulties. In his *Report on the Atom* Mr. Dean gives an account of his stewardship during the years he was Chairman of the Commission and those immediately preceding them.

He starts his story of the utilization of the energy of the atom with the minerals containing just a few pounds of uranium in a ton of ore that may be found in Canada, the Belgian Congo, Czechoslovakia and many other parts of the world. This ore undergoes a long series of chemical and physical processes before the tiny proportion of fissile material is extracted from it. The industrial effort that had to be made during the war to separate the fissile uranium 235 from the much more plentiful non-fissile uranium 238 with which it is always found in nature is almost beyond belief. The plant at Oak Ridge for doing this by the gaseous diffusion method is the largest continuous process plant under one roof in the world, cost hundreds of millions of dollars to build and uses more power than New York City. And this is only one among many. The complex problems of designing and choosing suitable sites for these vast plants, and bringing together the men and materials to build them were not made any easier by the speed with which it had to be done. Work had to begin on full-scale production plants before even the pilot plants had been completed.

After the end of the war the Atomic Energy Commission continued to expand its programme of production and research so that now the United States possesses a major industry producing fissile material which can be used either for destruction or for human welfare. Apart from the weapons side, which is largely kept secret, a great effort is being made to develop a whole series of different types of nuclear reactors to generate power for industrial or domestic consumption in the form of electricity or to propel ships, submarines or aeroplanes. Most of these aims have already been achieved, although not at a cost that is low enough to compete economically with the present power sources except in special circumstances. It is likely that further research

will reduce the cost of atomic power, and in any case it is of the highest importance because the world reserves of coal and oil are being used up at an alarming rate.

During the war the atomic energy programme was under the control of the military, but as this was not considered by responsible Americans to be a satisfactory arrangement in peacetime, provisions were made when the Atomic Energy Commission was set up that the operations it controlled should be transferred to industrial management as soon as this was possible both technically and from the point of view of national security. At the present time many large industrial firms are working as contractors for the Atomic Energy Commission on a cost plus basis, and they are negotiating for a greater degree of autonomy. The discussion given in Mr. Dean's book will be of great value to anyone wishing to follow these new developments.

The other peaceful uses of atomic energy such as the application of radioisotopes to study complex bodily and industrial processes are also described in easily understandable terms. These have already made possible a large number of researches which could not have been carried out in any other way. Radioisotopes can be made in the same nuclear reactors which generate atomic power, and large numbers of consignments of them are already being sent to research institutions all over the world from England and the United States. It is certain that radioisotopes will find even more applications in the future than they have found in the past.

The danger that other nations might use the results of the new discoveries to disturb the peace of the world forced the United States to continue the war-time security measures, and Mr. Dean describes the difficulties and expense of ensuring that no vital information is allowed to escape. A still more difficult problem is to decide what should be kept secret and what should be freely published, for, while free publication would help a potential enemy, over-secrecy would strangle our own effort by keeping important information from some of our own scientists when it is probably already known to potential enemies. He makes a strong plea for the freer exchange of information among the Western nations so that they can avoid a costly duplication of effort. Furthermore, it must not be imagined that keeping a discovery secret will prevent a potential enemy from finding it out sooner or later, for they have competent scientists as well.

Although Mr. Dean's book is mainly concerned with the American achievements, he sympathetically reviews the important work that has been done in this country as well as that in the other European and Asiatic nations. A whole chapter is devoted to atomic energy behind the Iron Curtain, and he emphasizes that although at the present time the industrial capacity of the U.S.S.R. is considerably

less than that of the U.S.A., it is rapidly increasing and that there is in the U.S.S.R. a large body of highly trained scientists who are quite as capable as their Western colleagues.

The present international situation is a most unsatisfactory one. Many of the best scientists of many nations are engaged in research which has immense potentialities for the good of mankind. Yet instead of co-operation and freedom of publication there is suspicion and secrecy. Instead of being applied to increasing man's happiness, the greater part of the present effort is being spent on producing weapons which may be used to destroy him. The scientists have made possible the utilization of a force of immense power, but the responsibility of seeing that it is rightly used is not theirs alone but belongs to the whole community. But the citizen of to-day can only play his full part in these momentous developments if he understands at least a little of their potentialities and their dangers. Many books have been written to help him to do this, but none provides such an adequate coverage of the whole field as Mr. Dean's *Report on the Atom*. It is a book which deserves to be widely read, particularly by those who, while not being specialists in the field of atomic energy, hold responsible positions in the community. Then they will be able to play their part in ensuring that atomic energy is used for the advancement of man and not for his destruction.

P. E. HODGSON

REVIEWS

ON NOT BEING A LOGICAL ANALYST

The Emperor's Clothes, by Kathleen Nott (Heinemann 18s).

THE STRANGEST THING about Miss Nott's strange book is perhaps its reception by the Sunday (and some other weekly) reviewers. No doubt "logical positivism" or "linguistic analysis" (two very different sorts of operation, of course) are at the moment "one-up" phrases, for they suggest a powerful technical apparatus for the dissolution of traditional beliefs. A current invocation of these techniques, therefore, is likely to leave the reviewer untrained in contemporary philosophy with an impression of hidden power, of formidable resources held in reserve. This impression Miss Nott has clearly communicated. There is nothing so effective as an appeal to philosophical method, it would seem, if one would enjoy a persuasive rhetorical sway over a non-philosophical reader. Miss Nott is by no means the first critic to slip into this sort of rhetoric: Sir Herbert Read, to take only one instance, has been doing it for years, and has commanded still greater prestige.

To a philosopher trained in contemporary techniques, however, the odd thing about Miss Nott's work is that, refer to them as often as she may, she betrays no familiarity whatever with them. The evidence is that she does not know how to use these techniques. Had she known their use, she would have written a book at least intellectually respectable; as it is, what her work cries aloud for is a good strong dose of linguistic and logical analysis. No doubt, Miss Nott writes throughout with anger and impatient indignation, but at this time of day any writer who claims a philosophical education ought to have an instinct for the avoidance of the emotive utterance and the inflated abstract word that cannot be cashed at any bank.

One very trivial but simple instance will illustrate something of what I have in mind. For Miss Nott the Enemy is "the Neo-scholastics," and we may well ask what is intended by this abstraction. "Neo-scholastics" has a meaning, if not a very precise one, in recent history. The word has come to denote Christian philosophers (usually Catholics, and usually under sharp criticism from other Catholic philosophers whether Thomist or not) who in recent years have attempted to elaborate a synthesis of Thomism and such other original philosophical work as has won their esteem; Père Maréchal, of Louvain, whose inspiration was Aquinas and Kant, was a "neo-scholastic" in this sense; others have taken cues from Hegel or from Blondel. This sense, however, is clearly not the sense in which Mr. Eliot or Mr. C. S. Lewis, for example, is a neo-scholastic. There is no known meaning

of the word that fits these two gentlemen so far, and if Miss Nott is using words in senses of her own, she is under an obligation to tell us what these senses are.

The strange thing is that she indicts all Christians for precisely this offence. We never say what we mean, she appears to think, by the doctrine of Original Sin. Yet heaven knows there is a big enough theological literature on this matter from Augustine onwards, and there are ecclesiastical definitions. One is compelled to suspect that Miss Nott has been too angry or too disgusted to find out what we mean. She could quite easily have done so, and, had she tried, she would quickly have discovered, for example, that the doctrine in question does not make sense independently of a quite definite doctrine of redemption and of divine love.

If only Miss Nott had been philosophically equipped, knowledgeable about the things she attacks, in control of her emotions, patient in research and in reflection, she might have produced a book of some considerable interest. But *The Emperor's Clothes* is shockingly bad, and infinitely tedious. The reason for its tedium is the quality of its badness. For, to borrow a sharp sentence with which two distinguished Oxford philosophers once concluded a report on work submitted, I must sadly confess that Miss Nott makes no contribution either to knowledge or to error.

VINCENT TURNER

SUN-SPOTS AND BLIND-SPOTS

Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, edited and introduced by T. S. Eliot (Faber 30s).

WE ALL REMEMBER the compliment which the poet of *The Waste Land* paid to Mr. Pound in his dedication of that poem to him: "il miglior fabbro" he called him, using the words which Dante used in speaking of Arnaut Daniel. (For myself, I cannot help finding here a trace of courteous irony.) Now, in his Introduction to this book, he retains, in speaking, of Mr. Pound as critic, the same judicial goodwill. "I hope," he writes, "that this volume will demonstrate that Pound's literary criticism is the most important contemporary criticism of its kind. Of a very important kind—perhaps the kind that we can least afford to do without."

This is to establish a very high claim; and in so far as a prominent part of Mr. Pound's criticism is concerned with the exigencies of rhyme and rhythm, it suggests that, say, Champion's *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* or Daniel's *A Defence of Ryme* may be more impor-

tant critical documents (for the writers' time or for our own) than Sidney's more famous *Apologie for Poetrie*.

But Mr. Pound's activity as a critic is not limited to circulating a new "Workshop Rules and Practice"; and in his Introduction Mr. Eliot sets forth additional heads to account for his subject's importance. Whatever our personal estimation of Mr. Pound's critical gifts, we cannot deny "that he has forced upon our attention not only individual authors, but whole areas of poetry, which no future criticism can afford to ignore." If not an authoritative scholar in the archives of early Anglo-Saxon, Provençal, Japanese and Chinese poetry, Mr. Pound has certainly campaigned for the recognition of their aesthetic merits beyond all but their keenest custodians. One thinks, too, of the excellent things he has written on Guido Cavalcanti and Dante, both represented in this volume.

But, even here, what Mr. Pound would have us hold as a formative influence in the composition of verse seems sometimes an individual fad. In his treatise *How to Read* he has urged upon us the necessity of studying the Provençal song-books, and the present work contains two full essays on the troubadours and Arnaut Daniel. The latter piece includes many translations—the intermittent labours of ten years—which for dexterity of rhyme-effect must receive our admiration. But Arnaut Daniel's poems were written to be sung ("Their triumph," Mr. Pound tells us, "is in an art between literature and music. If I have succeeded in indicating some of the properties of the latter I have also let the former go by the board"); and one wonders, therefore, just how far the discipline of this particular form is pertinent to modern unsung lyrics. In recommending to the tyro the short poems of Gautier and Goethe, Mr. Pound would appear to be making a more relevant suggestion.

A final reason Mr. Eliot advances in defence of the status he confers on Mr. Pound is "that he has shown a more immediate and generous appreciation of authors whose work one would not expect him to find sympathetic, than is generally known" (as instanced in his writings on the verse of D. H. Lawrence, Robert Frost, and Lionel Johnson).

A reason which Mr. Eliot does not offer to account for Mr. Pound's standing as a critic is the latter's flair for talent-spotting, to which the essays in this book on James Joyce, Percy Wyndham Lewis, and Mr. Eliot himself bear witness.

That Mr. Pound has his blind-spots, Mr. Eliot readily admits (but has he not double the number that Dryden or Coleridge—critics with whom Mr. Eliot compares him—display?): the Lake Poets, Dryden, the Elizabethan dramatists, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and many another whom he notices only to abuse.

But if Mr. Pound has usually been convinced by the findings of

his own occasional bad sight, his work as a critic compensates us by its frequent "sun-spot" moments: how excellent, perceptive, and balanced is his "catalogue" essay on *Henry James*, how just and amusing his brief report on *Swinburne versus his Biographers*, how stimulating he is in his *Notes on Elizabethan Classicists and Early Translators of Homer*, and how creatively exasperating throughout at least a third of this book!

DEREK STANFORD

THE GRAIL

The Ancient Secret: In Search of the Holy Grail, by Flavia Anderson (Gollancz 25s).

THE THEME OF THIS BOOK is the nature of the Grail, about which the average reader probably knows only the legend as told by Tennyson, or he may be vaguely aware of the story which tells how Joseph of Arimathea brought the Cup used at the Last Supper to Glastonbury. Lady Flavia does not refuse all credence to this legend, but recalls what an infinity of romances surround the Grail in our land and in the Arthurian cycle of Celtic origin, so that our Grail is identical with the "Cauldron of Inspiration" read of in Irish and Welsh songs. But this leads us to the conclusion that there is practically no myth, fairy- or folk-tale unconnected with the cult of this receptacle which in the long run turns out to be a concave mirror, or system of mirrors or lenses, which so focus the rays of the sun (identified with the Lance which constantly accompanies the Grail) as to light tinder or a wick, providing thus a new pure fire. There can be no doubt that the Church has made use of this immemorial cult-motif in her Holy Saturday ceremony: but we cannot see that Tenebrae had any connection with pre-Christian cults, and certainly not with Mithraism. We venture to say that the account, here given, of the Mithraic legend, symbolism and ritual is enormously amplified by conjecture and pure fancy: we have no evidence, really, save the sculptured slabs: their interpretation has been provided *au petit bonheur* by the older-fashioned comparative-religionists: it is difficult to think that Lady Flavia has really *seen* the slabs, so does she generalize from one or two instances: and detect in them an esoteric meaning: thus is the Mithraic meal found on more than one slab? Anyhow, there is no reason for regarding it as a *farewell* meal! We do not deny the incredible industry shown by the author, but we fear she often relies on late and arbitrary writings, though she is well aware of the bogus occultisms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Then, having accumulated her material, she leans hypothesis upon hypothesis till a fascinating fairy-castle is constructed, but floating, we fear, in the air. Especially we wish she would speculate less fancifully about Scripture. St. John's

white "stone" (or *tessera*) in the Apocalypse simply is not "the white and mystical stone through which the Holy Spirit descends." When St. Paul speaks of our seeing God as in a "glass," *i.e.*, in creatures, this has nothing to do with magic mirrors. As for Urim and Thummim, probably two pieces of wood or stone, we think the meaning "lights" and "completenesses" was due only to the Massoretic vocalization of the words, which may simply have for roots the consonants for "Yes" and "No," and Urim cannot be selected as having been a crystal lens and identified with the Grail: nor can we possibly admit that the Egyptian Ra "became" Apollo—to choose only one or two instances exhibiting the author's *method*. It may surprise us that so little use is made of the Buddhist Tree: and we recommend Père H. de Lubac's recent book, *Aspects of Buddhism*. Her conclusions, however, are the exact opposite of the late Sir J. Frazer's, for she holds that her evidence shows an aboriginal knowledge of the Holy Trinity (the sun's rays: the lens: the fire kindled) and indeed the Incarnation; but that this meaning became known to an ever-dwindling circle of initiates and now has practically faded out. The notion of "inner circles" of initiates is a very perilous one to operate with, and invariably leads to guesswork. But the book provides, as indeed Lady Flavia hopes it will, an immense amount of material at which experts in each section may work.

C. C. MARTINDALE

SUPERSONIC MEN

Tomorrow is Already Here, by Robert Jungk (Rupert Hart-Davis 16s).

THE AUTHOR, a liberal Jewish journalist who suffered under the Nazi tyranny, is concerned about the dehumanizing effects of modern materialism in a reputedly free world. He has been to the United States and has there witnessed the transformation and adaptations that are necessary to fit men for the new atomic and supersonic age. The centres, typical no doubt of many places elsewhere in the world, where these transformations and adaptations are taking place are enshrouded in a great deal of mystery. They are isolated as much as possible, not merely for security reasons, but because the materials employed are dangerous to well-disposed persons, including the workers themselves. Mr. Jungk is not interested in technological secrets: his preoccupation is with what is happening to the men who have to make and man the new gadgets. He shows us some of them "living" in a whole series of unnatural settings. In an atomic factory, for instance, they are compelled at every step to watch out for contaminated floors, radio-active rays, neutronic flux, "hot regions" and unclean air. Outside the factory, they live an artificial existence, from which it is anything but easy to escape.

The most striking bit of reportage in the book is concerned with the evolution of the modern jet pilot, who is designed to fly so high and at such speeds that he will never see the oceans he crosses and can only identify the contours of lands and continents as fleeting shadows on a radar screen. These men have no time for emotions: "they'd be a mortal danger to them." A description is given of the training these "poor little supermen" have to undergo. They are "shaken, beaten, kneaded, scalded, frozen, suffocated, crushed" daily. Their weak flesh is examined objectively and pitilessly. Their capacity to suffer is tested and recorded in units of pain, in "dolors." And these tests drew from an Air Force instructor in the author's presence the assertion that "measured by the flying tasks which lie ahead of him, man is a faulty construction." That might epitomize Mr. Jungk's thesis.

The trouble is to know what to do in the situation described in this part of *Tomorrow is Already Here*. The individual would appear to be able to do nothing about it except to preserve his own integrity as best he can and to pray for the salvation of men. Fear—the fear of being overwhelmed by an enemy whose philosophy of life is the reverse of one's own—is what is responsible for the impetus that has been given to atomic and supersonic research and for the involvement of so many people in it. At the same time it is well to recognize that developments in these spheres would have come in any event, if more leisurely and more circumspectly. The real danger consists not in the organization of the new knowledge and techniques, but in the ruthless employment of these in the future against populations that can only inadequately protect themselves.

There is a second side to Mr. Jungk's book which has nothing to do with the preparation for war. In this is brought up to date the history of mechanization in agriculture, industry and commerce with which we are all familiar and in which in a special way America has been a pioneer. Again, Mr. Jungk has a sensational story to tell—of bees doing more fertilizing work for less honey, of pigs being induced to have three broods a year instead of two, of feeding pigs on synthetic milk from artificial udders, tape-recorders and loud speakers being utilized to simulate the grunting of a nursing sow. Cows are made to stand side by side in long rows before automatically refilled feeding troughs and are limited in their movements by electrically-charged wires. They thus let their dung fall on the spot where it can most easily be removed with mechanical clearing equipment. And so on; more and more robot-like devices are employed in industry; the "clerk" is being replaced by the "operator," workers are selected and enthused by psychologists; and even lie-detectors and television have been introduced to ensure that staffs are virtuously efficient. One suspects here that Mr. Jungk is overstating his case.

After all these forebodings of a gloomy future, the book ends, surprisingly, with a short optimistic chapter. The charge of America "losing the best of itself, the esteem for freedom and humanity in the struggle for nearly Godlike omnipotence" is modified by the emergence of the thinker, the university type, among whom Mr. Jungk discerns a more humanistic approach to life and its problems. He quotes one of these men as saying that "all that you've seen in America in the way of technical development is not what is to come, but what is already passing." The future will not simply be an intensification of the alarming present, but a time of hope.

LEON O'BROIN

CARDINAL GASQUET

Cardinal Gasquet, by Shane Leslie (Burns and Oates 21s).

THIS BOOK is rightly not called a biography, though an outline of the Cardinal's life is given in the Introduction; the Memoir that follows is, Sir Shane tells us, "in the nature of a series of Essays touching the high peaks emerging from a life devoted otherwise to the sunken tranquillities of Benedictine vocation." The year 1885 was a turning-point for Gasquet, since over-work at Downside (where he accomplished the building of the transepts of the great abbey church) caused a breakdown which led him to live in London, where Manning "pulled him out of his coffin" and urged him to undertake historical work in the spirit of Leo XIII. But already in 1880 Gasquet had welcomed Edmund Bishop at Downside, and here the author gives him that full recognition that he deserves. Bishop's research was amazingly deep, his memory miraculous, and his intuitions (e.g., into the provenance and value of manuscripts) unerring: it is acknowledged that Gasquet's first "great" book, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, was in reality Bishop's book: so long as he could work, he not only supplied Gasquet with materials that he himself could not arrange, but checked Gasquet's statements which were not always well-founded. That Gasquet made mistakes is not surprising; he was breaking so much new ground and destroying so much Protestant myth; what worried his friends was that he did not correct them in later editions and clung obstinately to theories (such as that the Wycliffite Bible was really a Catholic earlier version) when they had been definitely disproved. This was partly due to his belief that he would find further evidence supporting him, to his life in so many ways distracted, to a constitutional dislike for revision, and (when he was vulgarly abused) to a feeling that in him his whole monastic family was being reviled, and he disdained to reply. Thus his very great value as a historian was disproportionately obscured.

Gasquet, helped by Bishop, was able to give strong and unimpeachable advice at Rome in the discussion about Anglican Orders. The tale need not be yet again re-told. But, as always, we are left marvelling at the *idée fixe* which alone could account for men like Halifax, Lacy and Puller giving so perfectly false an account of religion in England (Portal we think to have been an enthusiastic dupe; Duchesne perhaps began, as so often, by being "naughty" and then became obstinate); and again, at the complete inability of the Italian (and no doubt Latins generally) even to guess how Englishmen feel or think (when think they do). If once it could be clear that the Church of England represents but a fraction of our nation, and the Anglo-Catholics but a tiny fraction of that community! Other chapters deal with Gasquet's American visits; with correspondence with Bishop, Cardinal Merry del Val, and innumerable others—all of high interest (and much humour) but involving many returns on what has been said earlier. What few know is that Gasquet for much time was the only authority in Rome who could present the English attitude in the First World War to the Vatican; and not only on this occasion has the imperceptiveness, if not *incuria*, of our own foreign representatives left us aghast. The author's style, need we say, is epigrammatic, gay, even impish: he is grateful to Downside for its "generous kindness" in helping him, "only equalled by [its] wisdom in disclaiming responsibility for comment or conclusions." As for us, we must say that Loisy was *not* a "master" (Gasquet: 1892); and that Fr. Thurston's writings were *never* "sawdust" (Gasquet: 1892); and we cannot allow that Tyrrell was "unequivocal" and von Hügel given to "mystical fidgets" (Leslie: p. 90). But these friskings do not injure the solid value of this book.

C. C. MARTINDALE

RECENT TUDOR STUDIES

The Tudor Age, by James A. Williamson (Longmans 25s).

Tudor England, by David Harrison (Cassell. Two vols., 35s. each).

MR. WILLIAMSON'S *The Tudor Age* is part of a nine-volume history of England to be published by Longmans. Nearly fifty years have passed since the same firm published the valuable *Political History of England* in twelve volumes. The present series is intended to incorporate the results of recent work; and by its insistence on social, economic, constitutional and cultural, as well as political, history, it indicates the change of historical outlook.

To some extent Mr. Williamson has succeeded in fulfilling the aim of the series. The general reader will appreciate the clear narrative

style, and the student will find in the book a valuable account of the development of the activities of our naval and merchant marine. The book, however, does not seem to be a very good guide for the general reader. The author claims that "it is useful to the reader that the author should confess his bias at the outset. Mine makes me . . . give greater attention to governing events in the economic, mercantile, and maritime spheres." That is fair; but the reader ought to be given an adequate account of constitutional developments, and he does not get it; but he does get an unnecessarily detailed account of the attempted French invasion of 1545. Some of Mr. Williamson's judgments are startling; he thinks there is no moral difference between Charles V and Henry VIII; he suggests that the English people played a large part in the Reformation, and writes: "The rich man might buy hundreds of masses for his soul, the poor man could only lament his inability to do the like." Mr. Williamson should remember the incident of the widow's mite. Though he shows no prejudice, his treatment of religious affairs does not inspire confidence.

The purpose of Dr. Harrison's *Tudor England* is to combine "(1) a factual narrative of events showing who did what and when; (2) a generous provision of notes. . . (3) a gallery of illustrations and a pictorial survey of the main activities of the people." Indeed, he has provided a splendid selection of portraits and prints; for those who can afford it, the book is worth getting for these alone: but he has not provided a satisfactory narrative of events. It is not factual to write: "The Renaissance connotes primarily the final recovery of Classical literature"; nor is it true to suggest that the voyages of discovery were due to the "Renaissance stimulus of adventure and to recent progress in shipbuilding." To speak of "Romanists" withdrawing from the Church of England is to write on the level of *1066 and All That*; and to suggest that the change from "Supreme Head" to "Supreme Governor" of the Church was significant is a very disputable and far from factual judgment. The Crown in Parliament could, if it so willed, exercise all the powers exercised by Henry VIII. The analysis of the situation of the Catholics in the last years of Queen Elizabeth is a travesty of the facts. The majority of the secular priests, of the Catholic laity, and the Jesuits were opposed by a small minority of seculars; Dr. Harrison makes the Jesuits the leaders of a small and disloyal minority opposed by the majority of loyal Catholics. These are some examples of his failure to achieve a factual narrative.

K. M. BOOTH

BLAKE STUDIES IN JAPAN

A Bibliographical Study of William Blake's Note-Book, by Bunshô Jugaku (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press 35s in England).

THIS WORK, by one of the leading Japanese Blake scholars, falls into five parts: an introductory account of Blake's circumstances during the period of the *Note-Book* ("The Rossetti MS."); a brief history of the adventures of the manuscript; a page-by-page description of it; an analysis of the contents, with tentative dating; and finally a setting out of the literary items in chronological order.

The present volume is the first of a trilogy: Dr. Jugaku promises further treatment, aesthetic and doctrinal, of the *Note-Book*. And one looks forward to these latter with less misgiving than usual, in that Dr. Jugaku, though obviously devoted to his subject, shows himself no fanatic. In the course of his analysis he remarks that, however sympathetic we may feel towards Blake's unorthodox theory of art, it is vain to try to vindicate his attitude towards Reynolds: there (and elsewhere) Blake was as unjust to other artists as the *Examiner* was to him. Furthermore, Dr. Jugaku comes out in the present volume with what is surely the basic criticism of the longer poems (and a curb which interpreters of Blake have too often dispensed with): "It was the irony of fate that Blake, who dwelt on 'Minute Particulars' and hated generalization, was a constant victim of abstraction in his *Weltanschauung*."

This reviewer is not qualified to do more than admire the orderly arrangement of this bibliography (the more remarkable in that the unusually difficult technical task was undertaken by Japanese printers), and to draw attention to a notable example of modern English studies in Japan. But the study of Blake has implications beyond the purely academic.

The overwhelming current influences on Japanese intellectual life are Eliot, Graham Greene, Sartre, Camus, Rilke and Kafka: a terrifying collocation. For in each case, sad to say, the influence is productive of gloom or enervation. What has come over is predominantly the cynicism, the revulsion, the negation of life—Eliot's Christianity is largely lost in transit (a Japanese academic remarked to me, "*The Waste Land* means too much to us, and *Four Quartets* practically nothing"), Rilke's "celebration" and his peculiar tenderness towards what exists are pushed out of sight by his apparently more seductive "lamentation," and Camus's sympathy for his characters is drowned beneath the deep miseries of the "existentialism" attributed to him. It is true that Japanese intellectuals do have some good reasons for their gloom, spiritual and economic. But let them write about their own gloom, and not about this imported, "literary" concoction. The

younger Japanese poets are striving to create their own tradition of "modernism": turning away—as, it seems to me, they must—from the rigid, static forms of their national poetry, they inevitably look to the European giants of the twenties. Or, more often, squint at them through the haze of translation. And it seems to me most unhappy that their efforts should appear in an anthology entitled *Waste Land*.

Under these circumstances, it is all the more salutary that attention should be drawn to a poet of Blake's nature—a poet in whom personal bitterness is generally transmuted into a healthy if sometimes eccentric anger, and one whose vigorous and sanguine concern for humanity cannot easily be ignored. An important aspect of Dr. Jugaku's publication is that, in a most timely fashion, it refers its readers to a manuscript containing poetry of this kind—

For the tear is an intellectual thing,
And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King,
And the bitter groan of the Martyr's woe
Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow—

and prose like this—

"What," it will be Question'd, "When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?" O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty!

D. J. ENRIGHT

SHORTER NOTICES

Jew and Greek, by Dom Gregory Dix (Dacre Press 12s 6d).

THIS SEEMS to be a really important work despite its brevity and the fact that, being posthumous, it did not receive the amplification which the author wished to give it. Canon Carpenter the Warden of Keble, is to be congratulated and thanked on his excellent edition, and the printers and publishers on the way in which it has been presented.

A short review, cannot hope of course, to do justice to the depth of thought and breadth of learning which have gone to the production of the book. Briefly, Dom Gregory presents the Incarnation against the background of the perennial conflict which went on from at least 1,000 B.C. between the "Syriac" and "Greek" cultures and shows how Christianity, influenced by both, yet was not to be identified with either; although the struggle went on after the establishment of the Christian Church, the Church itself transcended both cultures.

The great importance of the book seems to lie in the fact that it emphasizes and illuminates in a striking way the historicity of the Incarnation. Familiar as we are with works which discuss the historical background of the New Testament and so on, we rarely encounter books which really seem to bring out the way in which the whole Christian movement sprang in a very real sense from the world process, even whilst it represents the entrance of the transcendent God into His creation. We cannot but regret that Dom Gregory did not live to develop this brief study into what might have been a really epoch-making work; but, even as it stands, it is a book which deserves the widest publicity. Admittedly, it is not a book for the general reader as it requires a not inconsiderable knowledge of the history of the time, but any normally intelligent and sufficiently educated person will undoubtedly profit from reading it.

A Layman's Love of Letters, by G. M. Trevelyan, O.M. (Longmans 11s 6d).

THESE are the Clark Lectures (Cambridge, 1953), and Mr. Trevelyan calls himself a "layman" because he has not been a professional *littérateur* or critic but a historian. Still, he has known instinctively that one cannot write the history of a man or an age unless one knows the prose and poetry of the period; and, from our memories of hearing him recite poetry when still at school, we are sure that he has always had poetry in him. He is rightly clear that no one provoked a great and general admiration without having been in some ways really admirable; so he deprecates the "debunking" habit and will not allow, say, Kipling or Scott or even Q's "tushery" books, let alone Dickens to be derided; but neither does he indiscriminately worship, for example, Byron or Meredith, and is willing to allow Wordsworth's later poems to fade out, rightly insisting again that a man should be judged by his best work, and not what he wrote when he was tired and the earlier founts of inspiration had run dry. He has interesting passages on Mountain Poetry, Geography in Poetry, and the Rights of History in Fiction, and he is helpful about translation—you *cannot* translate, when the language a book is written in is its skin, not its robe: this is eminently true of the Bible. His political "liberalism" is hardly ever felt; though he feels that Browning "drags in fantastic religious or philosophic ideas into poems that might be better without them," and mentions the *Grammarian's Funeral*, but absolves *Abt Vogler*, and perhaps dares not mention the downright mystical *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. He sets the standard for the "educated Englishman" very high—there is much that such an one absolutely "ought" to have read!

The Silent Traveller in Dublin, by Chiang Yee (Methuen 21s).

Mind You, I've Said Nothing! Forays in the Irish Republic, by Honor Tracy (Methuen 12s).

THE SILENT TRAVELLER has visited many cities and has written about his own land too, Chinese art and birds and beasts, and *The Chinese Eye* (which implies the Chinese mind)—a book that we feel we cannot dispense with. As to this, he gives us a clue: "I felt engulfed in the landscape: a specifically Chinese sensation, I think, and one which our artists have always endeavoured to convey." His line-drawings are exquisitely exact and economical; even when his coloured ones show mist (or even mud), they impress one as essentially clean: his traditions are felt (especially, perhaps, in his trees); what more delicate and detailed, yet full of movement, than his "Crowned Cranes," facing p. 62? He bubbles with humour, yet no word of his could hurt anyone; no doubt courtesy is in his blood and he is reticent; but he doesn't falsify. Steeped in Confucius, he illuminates scenes that might be commonplace with a new light; only, for that very reason, perhaps, and having Protestants for hosts, he does not advert to a specifically Catholic spirituality.

Miss Tracy differs in most ways from Mr. Chiang Yee. He undoubtedly sees more than he says; she, like a good journalist, sees a lot, yet not much; and what she sees, she says. Obviously, for a caricature, to *be* one, it must have points of resemblance with what it portrays; this already implies a selection. Yet does it? Possibly the "English Eye" in this case was unable to see more than what the pen has written. Myself, I incline to think that partisan politics in any one country amount to much the same as those in any others, so far as ambition, intrigue, mendacity and venality go. There will be more or less the same ill-distribution of wealth; the same all-round criticism which average folk will whisper but not state openly. Plenty of writers have seen and described that sort of thing, but few, we hope, would care to do so with the blowsy, even cheap and school-boy facetiousness of this author. Had her mind grown up, the irresponsibility of this book would have been less pardonable: as it is, when the maximum of goodwill between nations should be sought, her pages can but be regretted.

The Epistles in Focus, by Brendan Lawler, S.J. (Clonmore and Reynolds 15s).

WE ARE ONLY TOO GLAD when a book is written which will help serious readers who are not, however, destined to be specialists, to understand the New Testament, and (after the Gospels) St. Paul in particular. We still meet those who say they do not like

St. Paul. This may partly be rectified by showing St. Paul as a man, in definite and highly-coloured circumstances, leading, as Fr. Lawler says, a "tempestuous" life, and *not* as a collection of "letters" belonging to no time or place especially. The author's preparatory pages are a great help here: for he displays the infant Church as we can read of it in the *Acts*, and St. Paul's Epistles fall into their proper place. Next, he helps us by showing the structure of each Letter, and giving enough indications of how we may move, as it were, from room to room. But, to our mind, there are corridors, so to say, through which a beginner can pass rapidly. Fr. Lawler, like St. Ignatius in the *Exercises*, does not want to do all the work for us; yet we think that such a beginner may well pass over certain tracts in the Epistles, as he may whole books of the Old Testament, *e.g.*, much of *Numbers* or *Leviticus* or *Paralipomenon*: and perhaps we wish that the author, while passing swiftly over the less essential, had indeed done a little more, *e.g.*, about the marvellous passage in *Philippians* than just to allude to it. We think that the mysterious word *Pleroma* might have been made more of. But each will follow his own feeling in such matters. Fr. Lawler has rendered a very great service and will stimulate readers to wish to go further.

The Rock of Truth, by Daphne Pochin Mould (Sheed and Ward 10s 6d).

THIS IS INDEED A "CONVERSION-STORY" with a difference! The authoress was brought up more or less as an Anglo-Catholic but was from the outset something of a rebel and gradually shelled off her religion till she became an atheist. She went in for science and especially geology, and became a real expert. Her expeditions in the Scottish mountains and islands are worth reading for their own sake, so lively are they, though haunted by the bogey of Roman Catholicism, from which she could not keep quite aloof. The world was, for her, astonishing enough, but the Church even more so. It made, so to say, Mystery "accessible." Catholics had something that neither Presbyterian nor Anglican possessed. Her very power of criticism, applied first to conventional religion, enabled her to criticize the closed universe of materialism: it was, really, experience of the Edinburgh slums that inoculated her against Marxism and helped her to see where true freedom lay. A wise priest told her to go on investigating but not to think about becoming a Catholic. She *would* become one—at the proper time. So, after tumbling about granite rocks and tossing in small boats on tempestuous seas (which things are an allegory as well as naked fact), she came, black and blue, into the Church, still gay, still inquisitive, but full of "Deo Gratias." A book as amusing as it is satisfying.

The Lion of Cooling Bay, by Phyllis Paul (Heinemann 7s 6d).

THIS ODD BOOK begins about the Rackenburys, a wealthy cultured family, fastidious to neurosis-point, gay, charming when desirable, ironic, selfishly generous and unbelievably conceited. Julian, the eldest, adopts a small, uneducated child, Anne, whose parents have been killed in a blitz: he needs to "adore" something, but proceeds to mould her with all the savagery of the possessive: he really adores himself, and, when she runs away, begins to hate her, and heads, we should say, straight for lunacy. Anne earns her living by painting naïve pictures for children; lives in a house filled, apparently, with people who love God "in their own way"—their "founder," Mr. Laurent, an old-time Evangelical, is perhaps the only sympathetic person in the book, save Anne, who is gradually felt to be an angel in the flesh. Parallel to her is a boy, Catholic, corrupt, hysterical, who finally murders her and gets off anyway with fifteen pounds. We gather that this is meant to be the story of the Albigenses in modern dress. We supposed at first that Miss Paul was writing "with the thoughts" of her distressful characters; but we ended by fearing she speaks her own mind. Apart from her really funny account of the devil-ridden Middle-age and of Catholic schooling, at which she strikes like a comic cobra, she knows that the Albigenses, and others, reintroduced in the West the idea of the Two Gods, good and evil, but seems to suggest that they kept only the former in the shape of Free Conscience, while the latter (symbolized by a winged lion) created, first, the bloody Jehovah and then the Throne of Peter (to be again symbolized by the boy Francis, the enemy of Anne). Apparently the Black God conquers: the Neo-Manicheans are exterminated: Mr. Laurent is burnt to death: Anne is murdered. The style is too Henry-Jamesian—little hesitating questions; subjunctives; dainty dissections of sentiments. The "pathetic fallacy" is overworked: rather as we didn't believe in Chesterton's dramatically-coloured skies, we are not stirred by any sense of the macabre in Miss Paul's storm-tossed forests or sinister gorges. The book is an experiment which doesn't come off; and (unless we are quite wrong) a thesis totally unhistorical.

Origen's Doctrine of Tradition, by R. P. C. Hanson, D.D. (S.P.C.K. 25s).

THE CONCLUSION to which the argument of this book leads may be summed up in the author's own words:

. . . for Origen at least the Bible was his primary and only essential source of doctrine, which he would not consciously modify for any consideration, either the Church's rule of faith or the tradition of Christian institutions; and . . . though Clement was clearly ready

to modify Biblical doctrine by a secret tradition of teaching of his own, we cannot in all honesty associate with this secret tradition any fund of doctrine genuinely derived from very early times through Christian institutions.

On the whole Dr. Hanson argues his case well, though it has to be confessed that, in dealing with a writer so remote in mentality and background from our own, it is dangerous to be too dogmatic, especially as so much of our information about Origen's ideas is drawn from translations which may or not be tendentiously rendered in all the relevant passages. Moreover, when Dr. Hanson argues, for example, that "we cannot be sure that what Origen describes as an apostolic institution really is one," because "very few scholars, for instance, would confidently defend infant baptism as an apostolic institution," he does not produce any great conviction in the minds of those who remember what great gaps there must be in our knowledge of the practices of the earliest decades of Christianity.

In brief, impressive as is Dr. Hanson's scholarship, it would be rash to suppose that the last word had been said on this subject. Nor would it, except as a matter of historical interest, matter at all even if it could be proved up to the hilt that Origen had his own view of "tradition." As Dr. Hanson says: "We certainly must not ignore the fact that the life of the Christian Church was continuing uninterrupted before the New Testament was written, while it was being written, and afterwards. . . ."

The Heart of the World, by Dom Aelred Watkin, Monk of Downside Abbey (Burns and Oates 7s 6d).

DOM AELRED in his Introduction not only agrees that the cultural milieu in which the devotion to the Sacred Heart grew up renders it distasteful to very many, but declares that the very term "devotion" is misleading. We can hardly have a devotion to Our Lord under whatever aspect we contemplate Him. Since, however, "devotion to the Sacred Heart" is an expression current in popular piety, the author renders a great service by showing what exactly it should mean. It leads back, of course, to the whole doctrine of the Incarnation, whereby is inaugurated the formation of Christ's mystical Body in consequence of which not only does He dwell in us, but we live incorporated into Him. Hence the elaborate discussions about the difference between metaphor and symbol, between His divine love and His human love, appear matter on the whole for the professorial study, and not for the faithful at large. What does matter for all, is that only this life in Christ can satisfy all the needs of the human heart.

And indeed the chaos of de-Christianized society, and the fragmentary, inconclusive literature and art of our times, not to mention the contemporary demand for easier divorce, are enough to prove what Dom Aelred so simply yet so strongly states.

De La Salle: Meditations, edited by W. J. Battersby (Longmans 28s).

THE REV. BROTHER BATTERSBY continues his great work of making St. John Baptist de La Salle and his successors better known to us. It is clear that these were instructions, or "points" for meditation, suited to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, rather than the saint's own meditations: it was even argued that these paragraphs were not written by him at all, but were notes taken by various Brothers during or after his conferences. Indeed, the Superior General of the Institute, when offering the saint's writings for examination during the Process of Beatification, declared roundly that they could not be by him, being "so diffuse in style and so imperfect in composition"—a thoroughly French criticism. The editor, however, rejects this view; indeed, the very imperfections of style reveal a personality, and are quite unlike a collaborative effort. The spirit is sober, and definitely hostile to the Jansenism or Quietism prevalent at the time of writing, and style and spirit alike resemble those of the saint's undoubted letters. Br. Battersby warns us that the insistence on corporal mortification may not be suited to all periods equally; also, that St. John Baptist accepted without criticism the legends of the saints as then reported, not least in the Breviary. Notes are appended to the meditations on saints' feasts. Is it true to say that the Basilica of St. Lawrence was "completely destroyed by bombs in 1943"?

Alciphron, ou Le Pense Menu (Berkeley). Introduction et traduction par Jean Pucelle (Aubier n.p.).

PROFESSOR PUCELLE has presented French-speaking readers with what seems to be an admirable edition of Berkeley's *Alciphron*. The translation is lively and readable and the introduction, giving the occasion of the publication of *Alciphron* and relating it to Berkeley's other philosophical writings, is useful in itself.

Whilst it is true that Berkeley has been adequately edited for English readers, there is always a certain value to be got out of a translation into another language, especially French which seems to be admirably suited to philosophical dialogue, and readers of Professor Pucelle's translation may find a freshness in his rendering which the very familiarity of the original perhaps loses.

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